Out-migration in Nepal is a highly gendered process: *Men go away* to work in foreign countries and *women stay* in the villages, managing agricultural work, doing the household works and taking care of children and elders. When husbands migrate, work routines must be re-organised among the remaining household members and decision-making competencies shift. The study concentrates on changes in women's and men's workloads and participation in decision-making induced by out-migration for labour. The findings reveal manifold dynamics in the study area of Kalabang village in Nepal's mid-hill zone. These dynamics have ambivalent effects on gender relations, some leading to an empowerment of women and others widening gender disparities. The analysis clearly shows that factors such as age or position within the household considerably impact the effects of migration on the home-staying women.

Heidi Kaspar «I am the household head now!» Gender Aspects of Out-migration for Labour in Nepal

Heidi Kaspar

«I am the Household Head now!»

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NCCR north south

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Heidi Kaspar

" I am the Household Head now! ”

Gender Aspects of Out-migration for Labour in Nepal

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Contents

Index of tables

Index of figures

Index of maps

Index of photographs

Abbreviations

GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GDI	Gender related Development Index
HMG	His Majesty's Government
IP	Individual Project (of the NCCR North-South)
NCCR	Swiss National Centre for Competence in Research
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIDS	Nepal Institute of Development Studies
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SLF	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
SNSF	Swiss National Science Foundation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VDC	Village Development Committee

Nepali terms

ama	mother; old, wise, respected woman
ama samuha	mothers' group
bari	rainfed fields
chautara	resting place
ghar	home, household; husband's home
jat	caste/ethnic group
kendra	the centre of a circle
khet	irrigated fields
maiti	a married woman's paternal household; a married woman's own relatives
milan	reunion
nogar (Gurung language)	agricultural system of mutual support with labour force
puja	divine worship
ropani	Nepali square measure; 1 *ropani* = 509 square metres
rupees	Nepali national currency; 100 *rupees* = 1.164 Euro (17.7.2004)
ward	Nepal's smallest administrative entity

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Preface

Official data from the 2001 census indicate that over 760,000 Nepali citizens are "absent" from their households working in foreign countries; nearly 90 percent of them are male. This implies that approx. 15 percent of Nepali households are affected by absenteeism of mostly male household members and that the "left-behind" women have to face a changing position within the household and within the community; and last but not least an increasing number of Nepali households depend on remittances. Interestingly, while all the industries in Nepal including tourism are sharply declining due to internal conflict and other adverse macroeconomic trends, Nepal Living Standard Survey (Central Bureau of Statistics 2005) has shown that the population living below poverty level has reduced from 42 percent to 32 percent during the last eight years. The major contributing factor for poverty reduction is explained by increasing remittances from foreign labour employment.

Although migration has made large contribution to the Nepali economy in recent years and impacts on various societal processes, there is little research as such in the area. Since 2001, scholars of the Department of Geography, University of Zurich and the Nepal Institute of Development Studies have with the support of NCCR North-South – been involved with different research foci in migration research. The case study at your hand by Heidi Kaspar concentrates on gender relations in Kalabang (Kaski district). In this village as in many other Nepali villages labour migration has been a major livelihood strategy since years. The case study is less about the mobile life of migrants but more on the apparently static role of those household members who stay back home, looking after the fields, the livestock and the household and taking care of offspring and elders. Heidi Kaspar specifically sheds light on the unobtrusive transformation of everyday

life of the "left-behind" household members, especially the wives of international labour migrants. In Kalabang migration is, as in the whole country, highly gendered, and first of all a male practice. The clear gendered division of labour and tasks calls for a decided gender perspective.

The author's study on migrant's women's workload and on decision-making processes shows that home-staying women find themselves by no means in a static and safe world but instead are exposed to constantly changing situation of everyday duties and competences. With one (or more) workforce missing and with a physically absent household head, new work processes and procedures of decision-making have to be established. Last but not least, the study discusses the potential contribution of migration to more equal gender relations by giving women more autonomy and by strengthening their bargaining power in decision-making processes as well as the possibilities to alleviate everyday workloads of women.

We are convinced that the results of Heidi Kaspar's research will contribute to fill the research gap on the inter-face of labour migration and gender relations. We further hope that the insights will be of use for policy makers in Nepal and open the door for further research in this vital field.

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Summary

Out-migration for labour is a common livelihood strategy in the case study area. Furthermore, migration is a highly gendered process: migrants are predominantly male whereas women stay in the villages, looking after the children and elders, the household and the fields. The study focuses on the dynamics of the «static» side of the migration process: the effects of migration for home-staying household members. Thus, the aims of the study are:

- To understand the effects of male out-migration for labour on the gendered labour division and women's workloads.
- To understand the effects of male out-migration for labour on women's and men's participation in decision-making on household and community level.

The findings of the study are mainly based on semi-structured interviews, semi-structured tables and group discussions conducted in October and November in 2002 in Kalabang village in Nepal's mid-hill zone. Both with women and men and migrants and non-migrants participated in the research project.

From a theoretical perspective, the study adds to the conventional livelihood assets a gender sensitive alternative and emphasises the importance to distinguish individual livelihood assets by showing that out-migration for labour has different effects on the livelihood assets of women and men. The theoretical fundament is based on Walby's differentiation between form and degree of gender disparities, on Pfau-Effingers approach of Gender Arrangements and Sen's model of Cooperative Conflicts.

In Kalabang, there is a clear gender division of labour spheres: household maintenance is a female and wage employment is a male sphere. To agriculture, women and men contribute equal portions, yet gender divisions exist regarding at the specific agricultural tasks.

There are two exceptions to this model:

- In the agricultural sector women also work on a daily wage basis.
- Men occasionally lend a helping hand in household maintenance and childcare.

During migration, female's fields of activity hardly undergo any changes, whereas a man's lines of action change considerably with migration. A man gives up agriculture and occasional employment in the village and exchanges it for permanent employment in a foreign country. A woman, in contrast, looks after the children, the household and the fields before, during and after migration.

When husbands migrate, the exceptions mentioned above often wither and in this way lead to a more consistent division of female and male labour spheres:

- Female agricultural work on a daily wage basis might become redundant because remittances substitute her income or because she has to work too much on her own fields already.
- Men cannot support women in the household maintenance and childcare.

However, the division of gendered labour spheres is partly released again when migrants return. Compared to the situation during pre-migration, gender labour division remains more pronounced after the return because men are more engaged in wage employment than before migration.

Even if the type of labour does not change for a migrant's wife, the intensity clearly does. Women generally work more during migration because they have to shoulder most of their husbands' duties additionally to the usual workload. However, the quantity of a woman's workload is additionally influenced by the following factors:

- Age and number of children
- Age and availability of in-laws
- Financial resources (to employ people for agricultural work) and quantity and quality of land property.

Corresponding to the increased workload, women's participation in decision-making at the household level increases during men's migration. In particular, changes are evident in household heading, management of money and presence at community meetings. Women become de facto household heads meanwhile their husbands remain formal household heads. Women's increased participation concerning financial decisions and attendance of community meetings even persist after husbands' return.

The generally increased participation in decision-making during migration has to be put in proper perspectives. The following factors set limits to women's participation in decision-making during their husbands' absence:

- **Household type factor**: Women living in extended households face a decreased participation in intra-household decision-making. In extended households, husbands function as interceders between their wives and their parents by representing the wives' needs and interests. As in Nepali culture, daughters-in-law have to pay deference to their parents-in-law, women's interests are less represented when men migrate.
- **Level factor**: At community level, women's participation in decision-making does not increase. Indeed, women attend meetings more frequently during and even after migration, but abstain from contributing to discussions.
- **Relevance of decision factor**: Strategic decisions, which are of bigger scope and importance, are jointly made by wives and husbands or even by husbands alone. This fact does not change even during migration, where communication between the spouses is hampered.
- **Duration factor**: When husbands return for home-leaves or when they return permanently, initial division of decision-making participation is applied again. The only exceptions are the fields of management of money and presence at community meetings.

It is ambitious and delicate to draw a final conclusion whether gender relations change and to what extent. This has two reasons: First,

out-migration for labour leads to manifold and even ambivalent dynamics. Second, effects on workload and participation in decision-making depend on other factors such as:

- Financial situation of the household
- Quantity and quality of land property
- Type of household (extended or nuclear household)
- Age and number of children
- Relevance of decisions (strategic or operational decision)
- Individual – mostly tacit – arrangements between spouses

The findings are clear when looking at wives living with parents-in-law: Out-migration for labour widens gender disparities for daughters-in-law sustainable. Yet, disparities are weakened again after husbands' return. In contrast, women living in nuclear households can compensate for their increased workloads with more decision-making power, although this is very limited and admittedly not experienced as an advantage, but rather as an additional burden. Contrasting with the perception of most interview partners, I consider the increased participation in decision-making as an important step towards women's empowerment. Even though strategic decisions always remain in men's hands and a woman's decision-making power often decreases again when husbands return from migration, these temporary shifts might lead to changes in gender relations on the long term. Finally, it is obvious that out-migration for labour induces manifold processesin gender relations, positive as well as negative ones.

1. Introduction

For many areas in Nepal, particularly in the mid-hill zone, out-migration for labour as a livelihood strategy has a longstanding history and thus is deeply engraved in the culture. Migration is a common solution for making a living in an area with scarce opportunities for waged employment and for improving the livelihood assets fundamentally. Furthermore, migration in Nepal is a highly gendered process: migrants are predominantly male. Acknowledging the importance of out-migration for labour for people's livelihoods in Nepal, research projects in recent years have analysed on migration itself (Thieme forthcoming; Thieme 2003; Thieme et al. forthcoming; Thieme & Müller-Böker 2004; Wyss 2004; Seddon et al. 2001; Gurung 2001). Yet, research is weak on the "static" side of the migration process: the home-staying household members. The domestic effects of migration on wives and children can be described as a blind spot of research (see also Shrestha & Conway 2001:157)[1]. Since this perspective has similarly affected many people directly and indirectly, this is a highly important research field. It is exactly here that this research project starts. This is a fundamental shift in perspective from the migrating person to the non-migrating person, from migrating men to remaining women.

As gender is a structure that is effective at all levels (individual, household, society) and in every field (state policy, economy, labour, agriculture, childcare etc.), the analysis of its implications and applications etc. is an overwhelmingly complex undertaking. To focus the research, two key dimensions were extracted and thoroughly elaborated. **Gendered labour division** was chosen as the first field to be investigated. It was chosen because on one hand, this dimension is the one most frequently analysed when it comes to investigate gender relations. This extensive research background provides a

[1] Thieme et al. (forthcoming) list only three studies which deal with gender and migration in Nepal: Shrestha and Conway (2001), Molesworth (2001) and Brown (2003).

strong base to reflect theoretical and empirical questions. On the other hand, it was assumed that in this field, women staying in the village would experience dramatic changes, as the departure of their husbands comes along with the absence of one labour force within the household. First interviews affirmed this assumption. When husbands migrate, wives take on a major part of their husbands' tasks. Based on this situation, I determined the second dimension to be researched. It was assumed that corresponding with the increased workload, **women's participation in decision-making** would also augment. Hence, the following research questions can be formulated:

- What effect has male migration on the gendered labour division and on women's workloads?
- What impact has male migration on the gendered participation in decision-making both at the household as well as at the community levels?
- If there are changes, do they persist on the husbands' return?

Thus, the aims of this study are:

- To understand the effects of male out-migration for labour on both the workloads and participation in decision-making of home-staying women, and
- To understand how those who stay home cope with these changing circumstances of everyday life.

The study contributes to a broader understanding of out-migration for labour in Nepal, adding to previous research a perspective on those who stay in the villages and cope with a changing everyday life. It further reveals insights in the dynamics of gender relations in rural Nepal.

Three basic assumptions outlined below build the foundation of this research project:

- **Migration is a reciprocal process**. A married man will only leave when he can be sure that there is someone at home to look after children, household, his parents, fields, garden, livestock,

etc. A migrant needs someone at home to maintain social networks and to keep a place for him when he returns one day (see Rodenburg 2000). For this reason, migration is viewed as a «household strategy» rather than an individual one.

- **Gender matters**. Whether a person is female or male has fundamental impact on her or his opportunities, socialisation and expectations. Women and men occupy different roles in society. The gender roles are not least of interest because they lead to a gendered form of out-migration for labour: men migrate, women remain at home.
- Gendered labour division and participation in decision-making are **indicators of gender relations**. It is assumed that shifts in the gendered labour division and women's participation in decision-making result in changes in gender relations.

In order to answer the research questions, field research was conducted for two months in Kalabang village near Pokhara in the Western hill zone of Nepal. Data was obtained particularly from semi-structured interviews. Females and males as well as migrants and non-migrants were interviewed. Kalabang is an ideal study area for these questions as the predominant ethnic group is Gurung, well known for their longstanding involvement in out-migration for labour.

The theoretical background of the study is unrolled in chap.2 . The study's central issues are presented in a broader context and literature review compiled in chap.3. Applied methodology is portrayed in chap.4, followed by the core part of the study in chap.5 where empirical data is analysed. Chap.6, draws conclusions of the thesis.

2. Theoretical Background

This chapter provides an outline of the concepts and theories that guide the study in hand. As the social category "gender" lies at the very heart of my concerns, different approaches to concretise this complex concept are presented (chap.2.1.1). Guiding approaches were Walby's (1994) six structures of patriarchy (chap.2.1.2) and the "Gender Arrangement" theoretical framework of Pfau-Effinger (1998a; 1998b; 2000) (chap.2.1.3). Sen's (1990) concept of "Cooperative Conflicts" was important to understand how intra-household decision-making processes are organised and performed (chap.2.1.5). However, gender is no isolated dimension in social life. In order to understand interrelations with other dimensions, the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) was helpful (chap.2.2).

2.1. Gender relations: concretising an abstract concept

I use the term "gender" and not "sex" because the guiding understanding for this study is that there is no pure biological sex. Rather the biological sex also undergoes social constructions (for further details on the sex-gender debate see: Stephan 2000; Becker-Schmidt & Knapp 2000). Nevertheless, the attitudes of "women" or "men" respectively not only impact humans as individuals but also determine the societies fundamentally. In Connell's (1987:139) words: "In common-sense understanding gender is a property of individual people. When biological determinism is abandoned, gender is still usually seen in terms of socially produced individual character. It is a considerable leap to think of gender as being also a property of collectivities, institutions and historical processes."

To address gender aspects, researchers use manifold terms. The most common ones are: women's status (e.g. Acharya & Bennett 1983), women's autonomy (e.g. Molesworth 2001; Afonja 1990), women's position (e.g. Hadi 2001), women's empowerment (Acharya

& Bennett 1981, in: Molesworth 2001), women's subordination (Afonja 1990), gender asymmetries (e.g. Agarwal 1997) and gender relations (e.g. Rodenburg 2000; Walby 1994; Francis 2000). Whereas each of these terms puts a different focus, some of them are also used interchangeably. Yet, most articles miss a definition of the respective term. In this study, I will use the term gender relations. Gender relation is a term that is all embracing and thus serves the aims of this study best. In the following, one of the rare definitions is presented: "… gender relations like all social relations) embody both the material and the ideological. They are revealed not only in the division of labor and resources between women and men, but also in ideas and representations – the ascribing to women and men of different abilities, attitudes, desires, personality traits, behavior patterns, and so on. Gender relations are both constituted by and help constitute these practices and ideologies, in interaction with other structures of social hierarchy such as class, caste and race" (Agarwal 1997:1-2).

2.1.1. Dimensions to approach gender relations

Many studies employ labour as an important indicator to measure gender relations (see Obbo 1990; Massiah 1990; Olin 1976; de Jong 2000). Obbo (1990) argues that work is an important issue because work – besides socialisation and pragmatic negotiation – shapes social identity and status of women. Other important issues are access to and control over resources. Acharya and Bennett (1981, in: Molesworth 2001:65) derive women's empowerment from independent mobility, decision-making autonomy and empowerment within the household. Similarly, Niraula and Morgan (1996; 2000) measure empowerment in terms of women's freedom of movement and their role in household decision-making. Further indicators are autonomy in the marriage process and in fertility decisions (investigated by Dahal 1996 and Folmar 1992, in: Molesworth 2001:65). Molesworth (2001) analyses the indicators freedom of mobility, access to media,

education, fertility and health care, labour division and autonomy in marriage processes. Hadi (2001) uses the dimensions women's decision-making roles, educational aspirations for girls and practice of dowry in marriages besides demographic and socio-economic characteristics of families. Afonja (1990) employs rules and rights of marriage, property distribution, laws and relations of production and trade, political participation and access to resources as indicators for women's subordination.

A quantitative approach is to form an equality index. Such indices often employ fertility rates, female life expectancy, gendered literacy and wage gaps, combining issues of health care, education and labour. The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) are the most acquainted ones (UNDP 2003:310-317; 2001:210-217). Bühler's (2001:130-134) equality index[2] consists of the attributes occupational volume, leading position, compatibility of family and occupation, level of education and political representation.

Indices are an appropriate instrument to compare the situation in different regions. Furthermore, they allow a quick and rough idea of the gender relations in a region (compared to others). However, for detailed information, the socio-cultural and economic background must be taken into account. Indices' potential is further limited to only mirror status quo. They do not contain information about the causes and reasons of how and why social realities have been evolving – indices do not explain processes. Hence, to research gender relations, viewed as processes of social practice, qualitative analysis provides essential insights.

[2] In German: Gleichstellungsindex.

2.1.2. Six structures of patriarchy (Walby)

A sophisticated framework of dimensions to make gender relations scientifically comprehensible is Walby's (1994) framework of the six structures of patriarchy (see Tab. 1). In order to facilitate cross-national and cross-cultural studies, Walby (1994:1339-1340) demands the distinction between form and degree of patriarchy. The author differentiates form and degree of inequality as following:

- **Degree of patriarchy**: "Degrees of patriarchy are differences in the extent to which women are subordinated to men" (Walby 1994:1340).
- **Forms of patriarchy**: "Forms of patriarchy are differences in which the relations between the elements of patriarchy are different" (ibid.).

E.g., whereas female participation in wage employment is a question of the form of patriarchy, the unequal salaries of men and women is a question of degree of patriarchy.

Tab. 1: Six structures of patriarchy

Structures	Specification
Wage labour	Female participation in wage employment, wage gap, estimation of unpaid work.
Household production	Gendered labour division and workload.
State	Percentage of female representatives. Note that a high number of female representatives does not necessarily result in decisions that empower women.
Violence	Men's violence against women as a clear index of the degree of patriarchy. Note that different forms of violence might also indicate different forms of patriarchy.
Sexuality	Availability of contraception, marriage practices, legality of rape in marriage, sexual double standard, pornography, etc.
Culture	Participation of women in decision-making within cultural institutions such as religion, education and media.

Source: Walby (1994).

Furthermore, the distinction of form and degree of inequality allows investigating and evaluating societies, which are socio-culturally unfamiliar to the researcher without turning in ethnocentrism. "We need concepts of 'difference' which are not bound up with culturally specific notions of 'better', while not abandoning notions of greater or lesser inequality" (Walby 1994:1339-1340). This last statement appears to me a very important point, as it helps the researcher not to impose own normative assumptions, ideas and claims on others.Simultaneously, such a concept of difference helps not to fall in the trap of relativism. Therefore, this differentiation is used to evaluate changes in gender relations detected in Kalabang (see chap. 6).

2.1.3. Gender Arrangement theoretical framework (Pfau-Effinger)

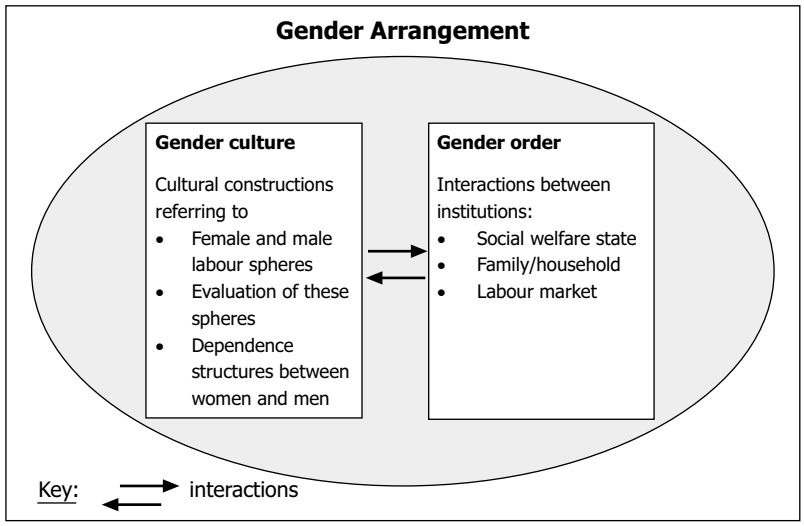
The Gender Arrangement approach developed by Pfau-Effinger was an answerto approaches that compared labour market and family dynamics of different countries. The approach is useful to analyse gender relations in an all-embracing sense. Pfau-Effinger's framework allows investigating dynamics of social change. Her approach is useful because it allows understanding gender relations as being based on the relations between culture, structure and social practice. According to the author (1998a:183-184), in every society there are dominant concepts about the gendered labour division and about the manner and extent of dependency between women and men. These concepts are called **gender culture**[3] (Pfau-Effinger 2000:68-69). A gender culture finds its manifestation in norms within institutional systems. Therefore, it usually is very stable. The gender culture impacts both structures and individual behaviour. As individuals have reflexive and creative abilities, cultural impact on them cannot be viewed as a deterministic one (Pfau-Effinger 2000:69). Contrary to gender culture, **gender order**[4] addresses real existing structures of gender relations

[3] In German: "Geschlechterkultur".

[4] In German: "Geschlechterordnung".

and relations between different social institutions (Pfau-Effinger 2000:70). Gender culture and gender order – both located on the cultural level – interact with each other and form together the gender arrangement on the level of social actors. The term arrangement is used to indicate the dominance of certain concepts, based on bargaining processes among social actors (Pfau-Effinger 1998a:184; Pfau-Effinger 1998b:148). Talking of bargaining, power comes into play. Pfau-Effinger draws on Norbert Elias' comprehension of power. Elias sees power as omnipresent in all human relations and interactions. Human interactions are based on power balances and thus mutually depend on each other. Mutual dependency even exists in relations where resources are not equally distributed (Pfau-Effinger 2000:73).

Fig. 1: Gender Arrangement: the theoretical framework



Source: Pfau-Effinger (1998:148).

For West European societies Pfau-Effinger (1996) detects four socio-cultural models on which gender arrangements are based:

- **Family enterprise model**: wife, husband and elder children work in the agricultural or technical family enterprise.
- **Model of the male supply matrimony**: wife is responsible for housekeeping and childcare, husband is employed.
- **Egalitarian-individualistic model**: wife and husband are employed, children are externally attended.
- **Egalitarian-family centred model**: wife and husband share wage employment and housekeeping.

As these models have been developed for European societies, their validity within the Nepali context is not self-evident. Even if none of these models exactly corresponded with the situation in Nepal, the typology still provides points for comparison and insofar facilitates a brief characterisation. In chap. 6, I will provide a characterisation of the gender arrangement in Kalabang.

2.1.4. Dimensions researched in this study

Out of the outlined dimensions of gender relations, this study concentrates on two: gendered labour division and participation in decision-making. These two dimensions have been chosen for the following reasons:

- **Gendered labour division**. It is argued by social feminists that "women's subordination is a result of a division of labour in which women are responsible for biological reproduction and for the daily maintenance of their families, activities centred around the household" (Prügl 1996:48). Or in the words of Niraula and Morgan (2000:66): "division of labour is the backbone of gender inequality". The more general conclusion the authors draw on their study of two Nepali settings (one in the plains and one in the hill zone) is that "the most powerful determinants of women's status are macro-level (setting or contextual) factors" (Niraula & Morgan 2000:67). Within this frame, women's individual

experience may vary considerably. Under particular circumstances, forces of patriarchy are weakened (Niraula & Morgan 2000:67). Age, level of education and position within the household may alter women's status. Gender labour division affects gender relations both on macro- and micro-level (Niraula & Morgan 2000:67). Mazumdar and Sharma (1990:185) rightly pose the question whether gender labour division forms the basis for women's subordination or is a manifestation of it. Though of considerable interest, answering this question would exceed the scale of the study in hand. It is possible that both are correct. Speaking in Pfau-Effinger's terminology, it can be stated that gender order and gender culture mutually affect each other.

- **Gendered participation in decision-making**.[5] The connection of workload and participation in decision-making is obvious and I am not the first to bridge gendered labour division and participation in decision-making. Acharya and Bennett (1983) studied the relationship between women's involvement in economic activities and their input into economic household decisions 20 years ago. Contrary to their study, the thesis in hand is not limited to the economic sphere and is based on qualitative data.

  Participation in decision-making is a frequently used dimension to indicate women's status in society. It is assumed that gender relations are equal when women and men participate equally in decision-making. Nevertheless, it is also acknowledged that decision-making power has ambivalent impact. Whereas decision-making power allows a person to carry her or his interests through and ensures autonomy, decision-making power cannot be detached from the responsibility that comes along with this autonomy.

  Despite the wide application of the dimension, little theorisation on the links between women's subordination and decision-making power exists. Hitherto researches rather appeared to content themselves with the common sense link that one's status could

[5] The terms "participation in decision-making" and "decision-making power" are used interchangeably.

be derived from one's weight in decision-making processes. No doubt, gender relations must be classified as highly unequal when female participants have fairly few to say compared with their male counterparts. However, does an increased participation in decision-making always empower women? The findings of this study reveal that other factors might curtail the gain of autonomy (see chap. 5.3 and 5.4).

Adhikari (2000:8) defines decision-making as "a continuous process of choosing the best among alternative choices". The author further stresses that decision-making is influenced not only by the resources that are at disposal, but also "by the worldviews of its members and by their social organizations" (Adhikari 2000:10). Miller (1990) provides a sophisticated framework to analyse decision-making processes. He distinguishes the process (how are decisions made?), the nature (composed of ideological factors and forces) and the techniques of decision-making (such as concealment). Household decisions are often defined as the result of bargaining processes between household members. Correspondingly, decision-making can be described as bargaining process. The most elaborated of these bargaining models is described in the following chapter.

2.1.5. Cooperative Conflicts (Sen)

The New Household Economy approach perceived households as single units of production and consumption. Wolf (2000:86) criticises that this approach "merges the individual with the household as though they are synonymous, particularly in the case of women; and it reifies the household as an animate being". Households themselves have no interests and no strategy they apply; but its members have their own interests and they may agree to apply a certain strategy. They may also not find a consensus and one household member prevails. Whose interests are acknowledged and whose are overlooked can be seen as the result of a bargaining process. Out of a number

of bargaining models, Sen's model of Cooperative Conflicts is presented in the following.

Gender relations within the household are characterised both by cooperation as well as by conflict (Rodenburg 2000:244). Who takes which decisions, who gets to consume what and who does what can be seen as social arrangements (Sen 1990:129). Hence, household members can act simultaneously according to their self-interest and in an altruistic manner. Furthermore, as Agarwal (1997:25-27) points out, actions that appear altruistic in the very moment might turn as self-interest when regarded on the long term. On the one hand, there are many cooperative outcomes from which all parties benefit. On the other hand, different parties might have conflicting interests in the choice among cooperative arrangements (Wilson 1991:31). Rodenburg (2000:243) states that individuals within the household are "motivated not only by their individual well-being but also by their perceptions of obligations and legitimate behaviour to which they should ideally conform. (…). The members of a household work together insofar as cooperative arrangements make each of them better off than non-cooperation." A central point of this approach is the breakdown position: "The breakdown position indicates the person's vulnerability or strength in the 'bargaining'" (Sen 1990:135). There are four factors determining one's bargaining power:

1) **"Breakdown well-being response"**: a person's ability to secure a favourable outcome is weakened if she or he will end up in a worse situation for her or his well-being without cooperation (Sen 1990:135).
2) **"Perceived interest response"**: a person's bargaining power is weaker the less value she or he attaches to her or his own well-being relative to the well-being of other household members (Sen 1990:136; see also Agarwal 1997:22-28).
3) **"Perceived contribution response"**: a person's bargaining power is stronger the more her or his contributions to the household are noticed (Sen 1990:136; see also Agarwal 1997:22-28).

4) **"Perceived need response"**: a person's bargaining power is stronger, the more her or his needs within the household are acknowledged (Agarwal 1997:11).

Rodenburg (2000:243) demands that researchers should also look at the sources of power (based on gender, age, land property, access to employment etc.) in a certain community as well as the perception of power (i.e. how women see themselves).

Limits of the model. Bargaining models are useful to gain insights into household relations (Francis 2000:77). Yet, their potential for explanation is limited to the description of these relations. Bargaining models do not provide an understanding of "how individuals' breakdown conditions are formed (and how they change) and how the terms on which they bargain are formed, and change" (Francis 2000:78; see also Agarwal 1997). Therefore, Francis (2000:78) demands to link individuals' actions and decision-making with the broader frame beyond the household. Agarwal (1997:2) even warns that the model may go awry if bargaining within the household is not linked with the "extra-household socio-economic and legal institutions within which households are embedded". The author further stresses the importance of norms. Norms set limits to negotiable issues, norms increase or decrease bargaining power, norms affect how the bargaining process is conducted and norms can themselves be subject of bargaining (Agarwal 2000:15-22). Of considerable significance for empirical research is the fact that bargaining is often an implicit process (Agarwal 1997:7) and therefore may be difficult to investigate.

2.2. Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) was mainly developed by the British state-run development organisation DFID, based on research of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) (Bohle 2001:119). Livelihoods thinking dates back to the work of Robert Chambers in the 1980's and was elaborated together with Conway in the 1990's (DIFD 2001:1.2). The aim of the framework is to

"understand and analyse the livelihoods of the poor" (DFID 2001:1.1). One of the main merits of the approach is to unlink the concepts of "agriculture" and "rural" by acknowledging the complexity of rural livelihoods and not viewing poor people per se as passive (Thieme forthcoming).

In essence, the framework allows viewing people as operating in a context of vulnerability. Within this context, people have access to certain assets or poverty reducing factors. These assets again are intertwined with the social, institutional and organisational environment. Together with the assets, this environment influences the choice of strategies that are applied to make a living (DFID 2001:1.1).

The framework was originally developed in order to improve the effects of development projects. Besides, the model is popular in research. The advantages of the model are as following:

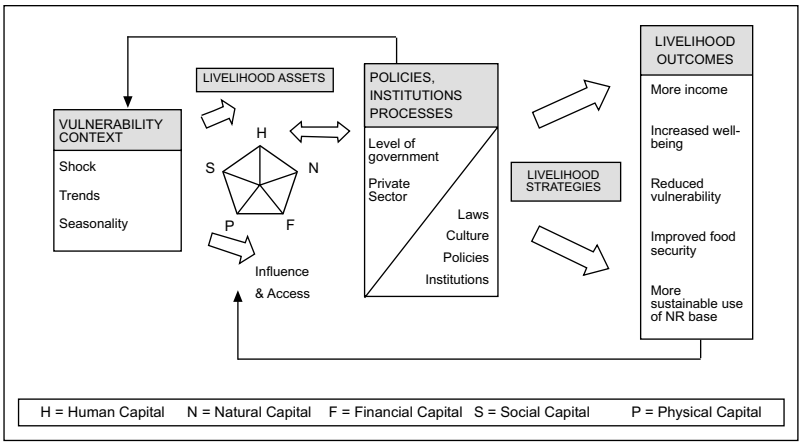
- **Holistic view**: The model allows capturing and analysing people's living circumstances in a holistic way, acknowledging that different domains of people's lives are linked with and influenced by others.
- **Macro-micro links**: The model emphasises the need to bring macro- and micro-level together. On the one hand, this approach allows identifying cultural, social and economic factors that determine people's assets. On the other hand, it allows explaining which assets are required to be able to apply a certain strategy, i.e. to use a certain scope of action.

2.2.1. The framework's components

The SLF is described in detail on the DFID-website. Therefore, a short summary at this place shall be sufficient.

Vulnerability context. The vulnerability context comprises factors over which people have limited or no control but that affect their livelihoods. "People's livelihoods and the wider availability of assets are fundamentally affected by critical trends as well as by shocks and seasonality." Trends and seasonality are not always negative; they might also have a positive effect on people's livelihoods. (DFID 2001:2.2)

Fig. 2: Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)



Source: DFID 2001.

Livelihood assets. In the framework, the assets are presented as a pentagon. The five assets – human, social, natural, physical and financial capital – are the resources which people have. The pentagon's centre symbolises no endowment, whereas the outer angle stands for full access or a high quantity and/or quality of respective resources. However, it should be kept in mind that these are no absolute values but always have to be viewed in their context. In an agricultural context, for instance, natural capital plays a far more vital role than in an urban context. These assets determine decisively which strategies appear reasonable and finally are applied. The five assets usually interact with each other. In this way, the increase of financial means can result in the purchase of land and thus augment natural capital. As asset endowments are constantly changing, the shape of the pentagon is constantly shifting. The assets can be combined or substituted in order to reach a livelihood outcome. On their part, asset endowments are dependent on institutions and policies. E.g. a new law might deprive one of her or his access to community land where she or he used to collect fodder. Nevertheless, structures and processes are not static nor do they exist detached from the people they address themselves to. Insofar, this is not a one-way relationship. (DFID 2001:2.3)

Policies, Institutions, Processes: the "PIP-box". This part of the SLF is the most elusive one. It consists of "structures" and "processes". Structures can be seen as the 'hardware' – the organisations, both private and public – that set and implement policy and legislation, deliver services, purchase, trade and perform all manner of other functions that affect livelihoods" (DFID 2001:2.4.1). Processes on the other hand can be viewed as the "software". Processes "determine the way in which structures – and individuals – operate and interact. (…) they are both crucial and complex" (DFID 2001:2.4.2). They include policies, legislation, institutions, culture (social norms and beliefs) and power relations (such as age, gender, class and *jat* [6]) .

Livelihood strategies. Livelihood strategies are the "range and combination of activities and choices people make/undertake in order to achieve their livelihood goals" (DFID 2001:2.5). The livelihood assets determine which strategies are at disposal, by structures, institutions and processes (PIP-box) and by shocks, trends and seasonality (vulnerability context).

Livelihood outcomes. Livelihood outcomes are the achievements of the livelihood strategies. They present the outputs of a strategy. Outcomes should not be mistaken for objectives. The DFID understands the term as a fusion of the aims of the organisation with the aims of its clients and should allow it to concentrate on "what actually happens" (DFID 2001:2.6). In my opinion, talking of joint aims in a highly hierarchic constellation – as the relationship between a development facilitator and its clients is – easily leads to imposing own objectives upon others. I therefore suggest to simply understanding livelihood outcomes as the results of the appliance of a strategy. People's intentions should be analysed separately.

[6] *Jat* (Nepali): caste or ethnic group.

The two core issues of this study are located within the SLF as following:

- The **gendered labour division** is located on two sites within the SLF. On the one side, all assets, i.e. human, natural, social, physical and financial capital, influence the overall workload. On the other side, what is done by women and what by men is determined by the gender culture and the gender order (see chap. 2.1.3), which both are parts of the PIP-box.
- The **gendered decision-making participation** is determined by gender culture, too and thus also located within the PIP-box. However, which decisions are made and how they come about is influenced by other socio-cultural concepts, too. Miller (1990:183-213) detects prestige, caste-centred morality and family-centred morality as the most effective ones. These structures are part of the processes in the PIP-box.

Finally, the livelihood strategies and their outcomes effect both gendered labour division and women's and men's participation in decision-making. In this point the study affixes.

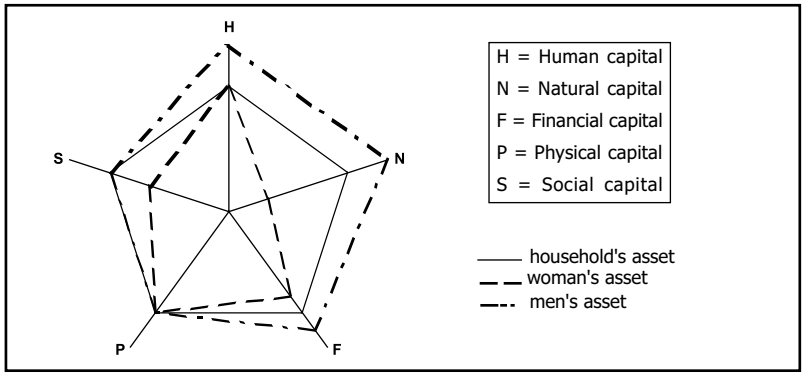
2.2.2. Adapting the framework for gender analysis

The SLF allows putting out-migration for labour as a livelihood strategy into a broader context. Out of a bundle of alternatives, a strategy is chosen in order to reach a certain objective. By emphasising mutual influence of asset endowments and the PIP-box, the SLF connects household and community level, which indeed is an important step towards the right direction. Unfortunately, at this point the framework pauses. By masking out intra-household level, gender relations cannot be comprehended in an all-embracing manner as demands the Gender Arrangement approach of Pfau-Effinger (e.g. 1996). Insofar, the SLF is gender blind. It is gender blind because it only talks of assets of "the household", leaving out intra-household disparities. It thus assumes that resources are equally shared among household members. To give an example how much gender matters, we might look at

land property. In patrilineal societies, land property is usually not the property of "the household", i.e. all household members, but belongs to the male household head, who inherited the land from his father. The lack of land property – which signifies in an agrarian society being without base for living – makes a woman highly dependent on her husband. This dependence again, diminishes her bargaining power when her interest is at stake. This might be one reason why women participate less in decision-making, work more hours a day and have less access to resources.

The example of the importance of natural capital in patrilineal agricultural societies gives a second insight: "Control over" and "access to" resources cannot be equated and should not be mixed up. Whereas women have access to land, work it and profit from the output, their control over it is very limited, as they do not own it. For the above reasons, the analysis cannot pause on the household level when consequences of migration on gender relations are researched. Rather we have to ask about the new share of financial, physical and natural resources and effects on the social and human capital of individual household members. Therefore, I suggest displaying the individual asset endowments as shown in Fig. 3.

Fig. 3: A gender sensitive asset pentagon



2.3. Conclusions: Dimensions of gender and sustainable livelihoods

In this chapter, it was shown that gender relations could be researched by means of manifold dimensions, using them as indicators to measure gender disparity. The demand to distinguish between form and degree of gender relations is considered as one of the most important claims, particularly doing research as a "Westerner" in the Third World.

The SLF helps to understand why people act in a certain manner, why people apply certain strategies. Moreover, the SLF shows the cross-linking of different spheres and links household and social level. In my opinion, the main shortcoming of the framework lies in its disregard of intra-household disparities in asset endowments and entitlements. Who within the household has access to resources and controls them, who takes which decisions and who performs which tasks looms large. I therefore suggest disaggregating the livelihood assets in order to render the framework usable for gender research. With the help of this adapted SLF, connections between gender specific disparities within the household and the social context can be presented.

Another approach that allows looking into the household and facilitates the analysis of intra-household processes is the model of Cooperative Conflicts by Amartya Sen (1990). By assuming that household members are simultaneously on the one side driven by altruism and aim at cooperation to reach every household member's best and on the other side by personal interests that might conflict with each other, this model is considered to meet best what is considered reality.

3. Literature review

Before we dip in the detailed analysis of impacts of out-migration for labour on gendered labour division and decision-making, the study's topics are explained in a broader context. For this purpose, the chapter in hand provides an overview over women's status in the Nepali society (chap. 3.1) and a compilation of gender aspects of migration in Nepal (chap. 3.2). The chapter concludes with key points listed in a summary (chap. 3.3).

3.1. Women's status in the Nepali society

Women's position in the Nepali society is determined by patriarchy, patrilocality, the principal of ritual purity and patrilineality. The following chapter provides a concise overview of women's status in the Nepali society. On this ground we will be able to appraise the empirical results of this study (chap. 5). After a general overview over the key dimensions of gender inequality in Nepal, a differentiation of gender relations is given. Out of the factors, which are responsible for the manifold varieties of the forms and degrees of gender relations within Nepal, *jat* (chap. 3.1.1) and age (chap. 3.1.2) were selected for further description, because these factors affect the form of gender relations most in Nepal.

Shrestha and Conway (2001:163) state that "women's standing in society is very low. (…) she has no identity of her own. As in many Asian societies, a woman's identity or status is directly affiliated with that of her closest male figure: to her father as a daughter, to her husband as a wife, and to her son as a mother" (accentuation in the original). The legal status of women in Nepal is ambivalent. Whereas the 1990 constitution "guarantees fundamental rights to all citizens without discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, caste, religion or sex (…), there have been no specific laws in Nepal to back this up" (Asian

Development Bank 1999:xiii). On the contrary, the Muluki Ain, the general civil and criminal code that governs the Nepali society "reflects traditional norms and (…) can be called extremely discriminatory against women" (Upreti 1991:22). Discrimination is particularly written down in the areas of property rights, family rights and sexual rights (for more details see Upreti 1991). In patrilineal societies, the tradition of handing over ones own land from father to son means that women normally do not possess land. The lack of land property – which signifies in an agrarian society being without base for living – makes a woman highly dependent on her husband. This dependence again, diminishes her bargaining power when her interest is at stake. The principle of ritual purity further enforces the discrimination of women, who naturally fall into impurity by having menstruation, giving birth and breast feeding (Thieme et al. forthcoming; Bennett 2002; Cameron 1998). Tab. 2 lists practices and institutions that reflect patriarchal characteristics of the Nepali society. For a more detailed description of the Nepali women's status see Majupuria (1982).

Tab. 2: Patterns and structures, which subordinate Nepali women

Area	Specification
Restrictions on educational opportunities	Girls leave school at an earlier age than boys. They are absent from school more often because a girl has to help her mother with the household chores. It is a common attitude to consider investment in girl's education as a waste, because after marriage she will leave the parental household (Thieme et al. forthcoming). Therefore girls' years of education are not only less but girls also attend schools of less quality. A girl risks 2.5 times more (rising with age) not to attend school than do boys (ADB 1999:16). Whereas 54% of all men aged 15 years and older can read and write, only 19.4% of women do so in 1996 (ADB 1999:15).
Economic participation of women	Women's work at home is not given any economic value. Often the male household head controls income sources and women's work. As women do not have ownership rights, they have little opportunity to make financial transactions on their own. Women are often paid less for the same work or are given work that is paid less than men's. It is estimated that over 96% of women shoulder at least 50% of agricultural production, mostly for subsistence (Molesworth 2001:54). Less than 10% of women are engaged in non-agricultural employment and less than 1% works in the clerical, administrative and professional sector (Molesworth 2001:54). According to Dahal (1996:147), less than 1% of the married women are engaged in wage employment outside the home. (For more detailed data see ADB 1999:25-39)

Family control over women's reproduction	In Nepal, every woman is expected to marry and have children. A woman's place in her husband's parents' house is not secure until giving birth to a son and in this way assures the lineage's persistence. Control over fertility is considered an important indicator of women's empowerment. Despite this, little research exists for Nepal in this field (ADB 1999:9). It is estimated that only 24% of all married couples use contraceptives (Dahal 1996:147). Suwal (2001:29-30) concludes that the higher a woman's education is, the more control she has over her fertility. Two more variables influence women's fertility: own and husband's occupations and age of first sexual intercourse with spouse (Suwal 2001:30)
Control over women's mobility	In daytime, women are allowed to go out in public. Nevertheless, women must be constantly concerned for their reputation, resulting in curtail of women's freedom to work, talk and walk freely in public.
Political participation	Lama (1996:11) writes that "women seem to vanish progressively from the mainstream political scene". So-called women's issues, in contrast, have gained attention as political themes. Significantly, the actual constitution was worked out without female participation. Women only occupy 10% of the political decision-making positions (ADB 1999:xv). The dichotomic character of the Nepali society can explain the low amount of female representatives. There is a clear-cut difference between the private and the public sphere. Women are accredited to the private sphere and men to the public. Female political leaders risk their reputation and often are confronted with reproaches of neglecting their families and houses (Lama 1996:5). However, women vote and may take part in demonstrations (Lama 1996).
Marital customs	The arranged marriage, where parents decide about the future groom or bride, is the norm. (See Niraula & Morgan (1996) for a comparison of marital arrangements of a hill and a Terai community.) In Hindu communities the concept of purity of the female body leads to marriages at a very young age. In 1991, female mean age at marriage was 18.1 years (it has risen from 15.4 in 1961), whereas men were 21.4 years old at marriage (ADB 1999:7). More than 86% of women and 61% of men were married before the age of 25 years (ADB 1999:8). The patrilocal residence system further disadvantages women. After marriage, a wife moves to her parents-in-law's house. There she lives as a stranger having little power to bring in her interests. Polygamy, though forbidden by law, is socially accepted (ADB 1999:7). A widow cannot marry any more and therefore depends on herself. A widower in contrast might marry again. Particularly in Hindu communities, widows are stigmatised (ADB 1999:8). The 1991 census shows that only 1.2% of first marriages end in divorce. This low rate of divorce indicates little changes in traditional family values and behaviour referring to marriage. (Dahal 1996:147)

Health and nutrition	Compared to their male counterparts, women suffer from poor health. Risks related to pregnancies and child delivery is the largest killer for women. The maternal mortality rate of 539 per 100'000 live births in 1991 was high even in the Asian context. Worldwide, the male infant mortality rate is slightly higher than the female. In South Asia the case is invert, reflecting gender discrimination in the family behaviour towards female and male children. In Nepal, 139 per 1'000 girls die each year compared to 125 boys. (ADB 1999:11-14)
Violence	In a survey conducted by SAATHI[7] and the Asia Foundation in 1997, 82% of interviewed women reported about beating, 66% about assault and 30% about rape, 61% were under mental torture. The report of the ADB (1999:20) states that "(…) trafficking and commercial sex work in Nepal is widespread and deeply rooted in society". According to a survey in 1997, 90% of respondents knew about some commercial sex work in the area.

Source: based on Subedi (1997:6-12), if not annotated otherwise.

3.1.1. A closer look: socio-cultural differences

In everyday life, religion plays a marginal role; rather the jat is crucial (Müller-Böker 1998). Nepal consists of over 100 jats (CBS 2002:28-33).[8] Concerning language, people of Nepal can be classified into two groups: the Tibeto-Burman and the Indo-Arian language family (Müller-Böker 1998:15). According to Acharya (1993:121), the language families differ strongly in the attitudes towards women. The Tibeto-Burman language family contains ethnic groups from the mountain and hill zone, whereas the Indo-Arian language family consists of the caste origin people of the hill zone ("hill-castes") and the Terai ("Terai castes") and the ethnic groups of the Terai (Müller-Böker 1998:15). The classification is not clear-cut, as the two language families influence each other and intermingle.[9] Communities from the Tibeto-Burman language family follow a more egalitarian structure than communities from the Indo-Arian language family. Tibeto-Burman

[7] Saathi means "friend" in Nepali. Saathi is a non-profit NGO working mainly against violence against women and children (see www.saathi.org.np).

[8] The data of Nepal's census gives only a rough idea. The 1991 census counted approximately 60 jats. As in these years there were no considerable immigration flows (apart from India), it must be assumed that the increase in cultural variety is ascribed to changed data collection methods. (I appreciate K. Molesworth for elucidations on this subject.) For a detailed description of Nepal's jats in the consensus 1991 and 2001 see Gurung (2003).

[9] For a detailed analysis of cultural processes in Nepal see Pfaff-Czarnecka (1989) and Gellner et al. (1997).

groups are generally less constrained in terms of mobility, marriage and income-earning opportunities (ADB 1999:xiii, Molesworth 2001:65). Within Indo-Arian groups, lower *jat* women despise of a higher degree of autonomy in the marriage process and fertility decisions than their higher *jat* counterparts (Dahal 1996:150). According to Acharya (1993:121), in groups of the Tibeto-Burman language family female sexual purity[10] is not given great importance. Therefore, marriage patterns are fairly flexible and child marriage is seldom. Women in these communities may move about freely and get a wage labour. A good businesswoman even gains social prestige. The ethnic group of the Gurung[11,] who are predominant in Kalabang, are a hill ethnic group and thus belong to the Tibeto-Burman language family. Macfarlane and Gurung (1992:27) support the hypothesis of relatively gender equal Gurung communities. According to them, Gurung women and men regard both genders as equal. This is also concordant with my results from interviews conducted in Kalabang. Both women and men stated that in former times, women were discriminated and emphasised that nowadays both girls and boys attended school and thus were equal. However, I concede with Macfarlane and Gurung (1992:26-27) that equality cannot solely be derived from education. Nevertheless, Pignède (1993:249-252) states that the relationship of Gurung wives and husbands can be characterised with solidarity. Furthermore and contrasting to women's status in communities of the Indo-Arian language family, women play a crucial role in death ceremonies and women's bodies are not considered as dangerous or polluting. Yet, the authors also state that even these women ate after men, did not act as priests and did not engage very actively in public life. Therefore, from an outside perspective, gender relations in Gurung communities cannot be described as equal even though Gurungs themselves do not notice any discrimination on the basis of gender nowadays.

[10] Pfaff-Czarnecka (1989) presents a detailed analysis of the concept of purity.

[11] For a detailed description of the Gurungs see Macfarlane (1976) and Pignède (1993).

In contrast, people in societies of the Indo-Arian language family view the protection of jat and clan purity as a high priority. Thus, control over female sexuality is of supreme importance.[12] In the orthodox communities of the Terai, strict female seclusion is practised (Acharya 1993:121-122). According to Bennett (2002:3), proper demeanour of high *jat* women is "*laj manne*, 'modest, shy, ashamed'" (accentuation in the original). "However, it is the household or family which most fully embodies the patrilineal ideals of male authority, respect for elders, and agnatic solidarity" (Bennett 2002:22). Yet, even within the Indo-Arian language family differences in gender relations are existent. Cameron (1998) elaborates the differences of high and low caste Hindu women in Bhalara in Far West Nepal and concludes that low caste women live in relative parity with their men, compared to high caste Hindu women. The author describes the intertwined relationship of *jat* and gender as following: "Gender relations at the lower levels contrast with those at the upper levels, while simultaneously maintaining the hierarchical principle of the caste system. This is possible because gender *is* different among the castes" (ibid:43; accentuation in the original).

The Brahmin and Dalit people living in Kalabang are hill-castes and hence belong to the Indo-Arian language group. As in the hill zone contact with Tibeto-Burman culture is closer than in the Terai, it can be assumed that women's status in hill-caste communities is higher than in ethnic and caste origin groups of the Terai. Yet, influence is also effective vice versa. Despite these disparities, communities of both language families – the Indo-Arian as well as the Tibeto-Burman – discriminate women, namely in terms of patrilineal property inheritance and patrilocal residence, access to and control over resources such as credit, education, knowledge and technology (ADB 1999:xiii; see also Tab. 2).

[12] For a detailed description of gender aspects of high caste women in Nepal see Bennett (2002), for low caste women see Cameron (1998).

3.1.2. Dynamics of a woman's status throughout her lifecycle

However low, a woman's status is dynamic and varies throughout her lifecycle. The status of woman in the household changes with her age. Basically, there are two events, which change a woman's status fundamentally: marriage and giving birth to a son. Before a young woman gets married, she lives as a daughter in her parents' household. When a woman gets married, she experiences the first fundamental change of her position within the household. After the wedding the young wife moves to her parents-in-law's household (*ghar*[13]). As a daughter-in-law a woman hardly enjoys any autonomy and has to work hard. Her situation changes again when she gives birth to children, namely boys. Through giving birth to a son, a woman affirms her status in her husband's family by giving offspring to the lineage. Pignède (1993:246-248) states that for the Gurungs bearing sons gives a woman the right to talk in family discussions in the name of the son and insofar augments her participation in decision-making.

Obviously, the position within the household – whether a woman is daughter, daughter-in-law, or wife of the (usually male) household head – matters: It normally changes with age and determines a woman's status within the household. Similarly, gender hierarchies are stricter in Brahmin and Dalit societies compared to the Gurung communities and stricter in Brahmin than in Dalit communities. Hence, gender relations are indeed defined through patriarchy, patrilocality and patrilineality. However, the concrete form of gender relations is also affected by other categories such as age and *jat*.[14]

[13] *Ghar* (Nepali): a husband's household; home, household. Subedi (1993:156) lists the term ghar khan jane as one form of territorial movement for rural Nepali households and explains the term as following: "you are married and are joining husband's home".

[14] For a theoretical approach to analyse on the complexity of different «axes of difference» (in German: «Achsen der Differenz») see Herzig and Richter (2004) and Knapp (2001).

3.2. Gender aspects of out-migration for labour in Nepal

This chapter highlights the significance of out-migration for labour in Nepal. Migration patterns are roughly classified. Corresponding with the study's focus, gender aspects are of special interest. Although there are theories approaching female migration, there is no sophisticated framework, which facilitates the analysis of gender aspects on migration. However, studies that inquired differences in female and male involvement in migration exist and were gaining increased attention in recent years. Last but not the least, the few studies, which focus on the implications of out-migration for labour on the persons staying at home, are presented. They unearth interesting conclusions.

Migration patterns in Nepal. Migration for employment is an old phenomenon in Nepal. In the early 19th century, first Nepali men travelled to Lahure to join the Sikh ruler, Ranjit Singh and the British Indian government started to recruit "Gorkhas" to their army (Thieme & Müller-Böker 2004; Seddon et al. 2001; Subedi 1991:85).[15] Out-migration for labour is fundamental for many Nepali households, as agricultural yields often are not sufficient to nourish all household members (Graner 2001:253; Thieme forthcoming). Bohle and Adhikari (1998:321) state that "half of Nepal's districts have become deficient in food". By the overwhelming importance of agriculture for people's livelihoods[16], this is a serious concern. Therefore, particularly among the farmer population in the hill zone "a large proportion of the male's population is mobile, spending varying periods abroad for employment" (Macfarlane & Gurung 1992:122). Yet, not all migrants cross the border. Some people migrate to the capital in order to get employed in the construction sector or to work as a vendor, tourist guide or hotel boy (Agergaard 1999:104). Nevertheless, national migration for labour is of inferior importance because Nepal's labour market offers a very limited range of jobs. International migration, therefore,

[15] For a more detailed description of the history of out-migration for labour from Nepal in general see Thieme (forthcoming), for the history of the "Gurkhas" in particular see Shrestha and Conway (2001:170-173).

[16] Graner (2001:253) estimates a rate of 81% of people involved in agriculture on national level.

appears as a considerable alternative. The most popular strategy of out-migration for labour is the recruitment to the Indian or British army. Recruitment to the army is popular not at least because 15 years of service qualifies one for a lifelong pension (Agergaard 1999:104) and free medical treatment for all family members. People also get employed as low- and semi-skilled workers or in the industrial sector in India. Educated people with the required social contacts may obtain a job as a civil servant (Agergaard 1999:104). A further strategy is the migration for labour to the Middle East (Agergaard 1999:104), Europe, USA or East Asia. The Department of Labour counted an increasing number of Nepalis sent for overseas employment by registered agencies to 29,704 in the year 2000/01 from 6,500 in 1997/98 (HGM 2002:290). As this figure only includes employees that have been sent through registered agencies, it must be assumed that the actual number is much higher. Further, the figure does not contain migrants in India, as India and Nepal maintain an open border. Seddon et al. (2001:xii) estimated for the years 1996/97 a total of 1.15 million Nepalis working in foreign countries. Out of the total number of absentees, 89.2% stayed in India (Gurung 2001:14). According to Thieme and Müller-Böker (2004), 200'000 Nepalis work in Delhi alone. Most emigrants who migrate to India originate from rural areas (Seddon et al. 2002, in: Wyss 2004:8).[17]

Analytical framework. To analyse migration patterns, Myron Weiner (1985:441-445, in: Subedi 1991:84-85) suggests a framework comprising of four clusters presented in Tab. 3.[18]

Tab. 3: Variables that affect migration

Cluster	Specification
Differential variables	Wage differentials, differences in employment rates, differences in land prices
Spatial variables	Distance and transportation costs
Affinity variables	Religion, culture, language, kinship network
Access variables	Rules for entry and exit
Information variables	Information network, communication

Source: based on Weiner (1985:441-445, in: Subedi 1991:84-85, 92).

[17] For more details on migration patterns see Seddon et al. (2001).

[18] For an analysis of migration in Nepal with this framework see Subedi (1991).

Regarding out-migration for labour from Kalabang, differentials in employment opportunities are the main reason to migrate. Spatial variables, namely distance to migration destination, also have an impact on destinations. Thus, most emigrants from Kalabang go to India. But an increasing number also migrate to Gulf countries. In contrast, only few go to Europe, USA, Hong-Kong and Japan. The fact that the bulk of migrants choose India for their destination can be explained with further variables of the framework, too. First, India and Nepal maintain an open border (access variables) and second, India as a predominantly Hindu nation is culturally more familiar to Nepalis than Moslem or Western countries. Furthermore, the national language Nepali is very similar to Hindi, the Indian national language. As Subedi (1991:92) rightly remarks, communication and information network – not included in Weiner's framework – are further important variables that structure international migration patterns.

Chant and Radcliffe (1992:10-13) classify different types of migration along two dimensions: duration of migration and its form. Regarding duration of migration, four types can be distinguished:

- Seasonal migration
- Oscillating migration
- Relay migration
- Circular/return migration

Return migration is characterised by longer-term migration, which ends up with the return of the migrant to her or his home area (Chant & Radcliffe 1992:10-13). In Kalabang, this was the form of migration I came upon. Ellis (2000:70-71) applies a differing typology, distinguishing between the following four types of migration: seasonal migration, circular migration, permanent migration (rural-urban) and international migration. International migration includes both temporary and permanent migration. Among the many variances of this type, a "cross-border extension of circulatory migration" (Ellis 2000:71) is added. Regarding the form of migration, Chant and Radcliffe (1992:13-17) differentiate individual and family migration. Individual migration

is predominant in Nepal, although there are some women and children who join their spouses and fathers travelling to a foreign country.

There is no concise typology of migration theories in literature. Thieme (forthcoming) distinguishes between "classical migration research", which focuses on initiation and consequences of international migration and theories explaining the perpetuation of migration. Chant and Radcliffe (1992:17-19) in contrast, distinguish three main approaches of migration theory: neo-classical/equilibrium approaches, structuralist/marxist approaches and the "structuration" approach. The authors claim that so far little attention was given to gender aspects in migration studies (Chant & Radcliffe 1992:19). Nevertheless, to analyse female migration[19], Chant and Radcliffe (1992:19-24) detect four main concepts, which have emerged in the 1990's:

- Neo-classical/equilibrium approach
- Behavioural approach
- Structuralist approach
- Household strategies approach

The neo-classical/equilibrium approach assumes that motivations for female and male population moves are similar. The model neglects differences among women in terms of stage in life cycle, cultural background and class. Furthermore, it treats women as a special group and can thus be called "female-aware" but not "gender-aware" (Chant & Radcliffe 1992:20). Behavioural approaches are more sensitive to ideological and cultural constructs that affect migration behaviour. These approaches are limited in terms of generalisations. They do not provide a framework for comparative research (Chant & Radcliffe 1992:21). Structuralist approaches in contrast provide general and global perspectives. The main interest within these approaches lies in labour redistribution through space and on women's position in processes of change. However, these approaches concentrate on production and thus neglect the importance of reproduction. This criticism is allowed for in the household strategies approach by

[19] As a matter of course, female migration is only one issue of gender aspects of migration.

acknowledging that tasks associated with housekeeping are as crucial to explain gender-differentiated migration as are wage labour opportunities (Chant & Radcliffe 1992:22). However, this approach still lacks empirical proving.

Gender differences in migration. Chant and Radcliffe (1992:8) state that "women tend to constitute a smaller proportion of international migrants than men, and are also confined to a narrower range of economic activities". UNIFEM (2003) in contrast, estimates that in Asia female migrants have outnumbered male migrants. For a rough overview over global female and male migration flows (including migration for labour) see Jolly et al. (2003). In some countries, e.g. the Philippines, daughters are more likely to be sent for migration because they are considered more reliable to send remittances (Jolly et al. 2003:3). In Nepal in contrast, the bulk of labour migrants are men, particularly regarding international migration. It is estimated that 89% of Nepalis employed abroad are men (Thieme et al. 2005:109; Seddon et al. 2001:46-47). The reason for this gendered migration pattern lies in the gendered labour division: "Women have the main responsibility for agricultural work, housekeeping and childrearing, and the man, as the main cash-income earner, goes to Delhi for work" (Thieme et al. forthcoming). However, little is known about female foreign employment. Seddon et al. (2001:47) found the actual number of out-migrating Nepali women (including those who do not engage in wage employment) much higher to a proportion of over 20%.[20] Women migrate predominantly for marriage purposes or accompany their spouses. Indeed, Thieme et al. (forthcoming) state that women never migrate alone but always in company of their husbands. They particularly go to India and originate from Nepal's mid-hills (Seddon et al. 2001:47). Seddon et al. (2001:47) state that "there is a distinctive history of female migration to India from several districts in the Central hill region; a very high proportion of these women become involved

[20] Worldwide, there are almost as many women migrating as men. In the year 2000, there were 85 million female migrants versus 90 million males. Female proportion of migration originating from developing countries is estimated to 46%. (Jolly et al. 2003:i)

either immediately or eventually in the sex trade in Indian cities". The authors suggest that a number of 100,000 to 150,000 Nepali women are working in India as commercial sex workers and a much smaller number elsewhere in Asia but also emphasise that women also engage in domestic service or in other forms of employment in the informal sector. Talking of national migration for labour, Badi girls and women are known to regularly migrate for several months out of a year to the Terai. According to Cox (1992), female prostitution is the norm among Badi households. The income of a daughter's prostitution usually makes up the chief portion of a household's income. Besides prostitution, women get engaged in domestic service and other employment in the informal sector (Seddon et al. 2001:47).

The Nepal government banned female migration to Gulf countries after an incident, where a Nepali woman working in Kuwait committed suicide, apparently because her employers tried to rape her (South Asia Monitor 2004). Yet, the ban was partly revoked in 2003 because it was realised that instead of protecting women – which was the origin aim – it limited their mobility and criminalised their migration and employment and in this way made them more vulnerable to exploitation (South Asia Monitor 2004). The ban is still effective in the so-called unorganised sector, particularly in domestic work (South Asia Monitor 2004). Trafficking is another important issue. It is estimated that 5,000-7,000 girls are annually trafficked across Nepal's borders with 20% of them aged under 16 (Poudel & Carryer 2000:74). Trafficking is legally not accepted but as victims are mostly illiterate and poor girls, they have no chance to fight their right in courts (South Asia Monitor 2004). According to Poudel and Carryer (2000:74), "trafficking of girls and young women has its roots in gender politics and sexual inequalities, linked to widespread economic poverty".

Mobile men and residual women. After having had a look at the importance of out-migration for labour in Nepal, its patterns and forms, I now turn the concentration to implications of out-migration for labour for those household members who do not migrate, namely

wives of migrants. As shown above, men predominantly perform out-migration for labour in Nepal. Yet, women staying back in the villages occupy a key function, too. This is a fact often discounted, but not so by Rodenburg (2000). She stresses in her study of migration in North Sumatra that "migration is not only about the people who move, but also about social and economic arrangements that permit certain household members to leave the village" (Rodenburg 2000:243). Without women's efforts in the village – if women were not willing or able to look after the children and elders, sustain social relations in the village, work the fields, etc. – a man could not seek foreign employment. Hence, migration for labour is not a strategy of one household member alone. Rodenburg (2000:245) found out that most women in the studied village in North Sumatra "took on full responsibility in the village without hesitation, because this was their share in the migration project (…). They saw migration as a joint strategy aiming at the long-term enhancement of the status of their family, and this also implied their own personal status." Actually, it can be assumed that all fields belonging to everyday life in the village are affected by changes resulting from a male household member's absence. Jolly et al. (2003:3-4) assume that male migration generally leads to an increased workload for women. Concerning the Gurungs, Macfarlane and Gurung (1992:122) affirm that due to the absence of men, who have migrated to foreign countries for work, "a majority of women shoulder the main burden of responsibility for subsistence and care of the young and the elder". Pignède (1993:249-252) too, notes augmented responsibilities for Gurung wives when their husbands migrate. He even concludes that migration raises women's status: "… she has taken authority by having to face the heavy tasks and responsibilities of the life of the family alone. (…). Thus mercenary soldiering has as a consequence raised the status of women by giving them incontestable authority, not only within their own household but also in the village community" (Pignède 1993:251). In this way, male migration may also lead to an augmented participation in decision-making within the household (Jolly et al. 2003:3). Pfaffenbach

(1995) concludes her study of a rural area in Syria with the statement that male migration urges women to cope with a new situation where they have to take on more responsibility. With the comparison of two different settings, she could show that effects of migration depend considerably upon living circumstances before migration as well as on the kind of employment husbands obtain. Women from one village could lessen their workload, give up agriculture and apply themselves to childcare and housekeeping – which was regarded as socially desirable. They did not miss their husbands much as they lived in a neighbourhood of closely tied networks consisting of women in the same situation. Women from another village in contrast, suffered from their husbands' absence due to poor social relations in their neighbourhood. According to the author, his lack of social networks was a result of dramatically increased financial capital of people. As their husbands were distant carriage drivers, women lived in constant anxiety. However, the author noticed an imperturbable self-confidence on these women. They were regarded as equal partners from their husbands.

Rodenburg (2000:236) found in her study that male-dominated migration had "contradictory consequences for women's bargaining power and control in particular and intra-household relations in general". Although women are left-behind whereas their counterparts leave the village and get employed in a foreign country, women are by no means passive victims (see also Rodenburg 2000:236). Women are considerably involved in the decision-making process whether to migrate. Rodenburg (2000:258) further concludes that on the one hand, female home-stayers manage the farm, they are "protectors of ancestral land and maintainers of social networks, the women provide a safety-net to retired migrants". Women furthermore attend to rituals, safeguard knowledge and nurture the next generation. On the other hand, the fact that women play a dominant role in agriculture does not mean that they control the resources. The land they work normally belongs to their husbands. Furthermore, the meagre resources resulting in poor or no alternatives dramatically limit women's scope.

Thus, it cannot generally be assumed that women with migrant husbands enjoy an increase in power within the household. However, women have their own interests and actively try to realise them (Rodenburg 2000:236-259).

3.3. Conclusions: Gender aspects of the Nepali society and out-migration for labour

It was shown that patterns and structures of the Nepali society are riddled with (or even based on) many aspects of inequality and subordination of women – even the law codified discrimination of women. A closer look showed that many aspects affect the status and scope to act for women. Two fundamental factors, which determine the status of a woman, are:

- **Belonging to language family**
  Even if only the two main language families (Indo-Arian vs. Tibeto-Burman) are compared, there are fundamental differences visible. It can be taken for granted that if the differences between numerous jats were analysed, manifold shadings of discrimination would be assessed.
- **Age and maternity**
  The status of a woman within the household increases usually with her age, and as soon as she gives birth to a son.

We have further seen that in the Asian context, women and men migrate to fairly equal numbers (estimations do not properly correspond). However, in Nepal the case is distinct: the bulk of Nepali migrants are men. The few studies that have been conducted on migrants' women staying at home all stress the important part these women play in facilitating out-migration for labour. According to Pignède (1993:251), women staying at home take on full responsibility and shoulder the main work burden (Jolly et al. 2003:3). They look after children and elders and manage the farm and the household. We will see whether these insights are also valid for home-stayers and migrants in Kalabang (see chap. 5.2 and 5.3).

4. Methodology

This chapter discusses methods that were applied to collect and analyse data. In the first section (4.1), general considerations concerning qualitative methods are given and the study in hand is positioned within a research tradition. The second section (4.2) includes the research setting, including descriptions of the research project in which the study is embedded, the selection of the study site and the field research situation. The third section (4.3) discusses data collection methods followed by a description of analysis procedure (4.4).

4.1. Impact of theoretical background on methodology

This study belongs to the wide field of gender and women's studies. According to Becker-Schmidt and Bilden (1995:26-28), this specific research field is based on a few premises and considerations. As they are considered to be important for this study, they are reproduced below:

- Women's studies were one of the first to radically view research as a social relationship.
- In social sciences this means a relationship between subjects who at the same time may be objects of social reality.
- In women's studies, to make oneself (as a researcher) a subject of discussion and reflection is viewed as a necessary theoretical and methodical reflection.

Because of the fact that interviewer and interviewee both are objects of patriarchal suppression, some researchers claim common concernment and partiality as principles of women's studies. In my opinion, this is a rather dangerous assumption, as partiality may easily be confused with universality. Haraway (in: Thüler 2002:83) addresses this danger in her postulate of "politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and *not*

universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims. These are claims of people's lives" (own accentuation). Actually, researcher should be clear that there is indeed little similarity in "Western" lives- apart from being a woman (which can have very different consequences) and living in a patriarchal system (which again might differ in its characteristics considerably).

Another important claim of women's studies is to hold hierarchies in interview situations as small as possible (Becker-Schmid & Bilden 1995:27). Therefore, it was an important demand on data collection methods that they would allow to approach people in an open way and to give informants the opportunity to answer in their own words and putting individual thematic emphasises in their responses. Furthermore, it was considered important to collaborate with a female Nepali interpreter.

For the above reasons, mainly qualitative methods were chosen for data collection. Semi-structured individual interviews and group discussions consisting of open questions were applied. Metz-Göckel (1995:351-352) lists the advantages of investigating gender issues with qualitative methods: Because of the multi-dimensionality, the complexity of conceptions of gendered identities as well as relations between men and women, the field of social gender research is one that is the best accessed through qualitative and interpretative approaches.

4.2. Research setting

The thesis in hand is part of the National Centre for Competence in Research North South (NCCR North-South), individual project (IP) number 6, which focuses on institutional change and livelihood strategies. The study contributes to the prospering research on out-migration for labour within the NCCR North-South[21] by adding insights to effects of out-migration for labour on the position of the home-staying women in Nepal.

[21] See Geiser and Müller-Böker 2003; Müller-Böker 1999; Müller-Böker and Thieme forthcoming; Thieme 2003; Thieme and Müller-Böker 2004; Thieme et al. 2005; Thieme et al. forthcoming; Wyss 2004; Seddon et al. 2001. Furthermore, Balz Strasser, Christine Bichsel (IP7) and Silvia Hostettler (IP5) are studying migration processes in Mexico, India and Kyrgyzstan, respectively.

4.3. Data collection methodology

This chapter gives a more detailed insight into the data collection methods. Furthermore, interview guidelines are outlined, target groups are accounted and the organisation of focus group discussions and the interview situation are described.

Tab. 4 : Overview over applied methods

Method	Research interest
Semi-structured interviews	Changes coming along with out-migration for labour
Expert interviews[22]	Information about the settlement
Semi-structured tables	- Social norms on the gendered labour division - Women's and men's workload - Women's and men's participation in decision-making
Focus groups	Changes coming along with out-migration for labour
Mental map	Social composition of the settlement, geographical and social overview

To get as broad an image as possible, a variety of data collection procedures were applied (see Tab. 4). The major part of the data was obtained from semi-structured interviews. Despite the overall advantages of open questions, for some specific questions such as the gendered labour division and people's participation in decision-making processes, structured interviews with closed questions were considered an ideal completion. The first week of field visit was used to gain general information about the settlement at Kalabang. Therefore, experts – such as a male politician, two male elders, the president of *ama samuha*[23] and a woman working for an non-governmental organisation (NGO) on family planning – were interviewed. An elder Gurung man was asked to draw a mental map of the settlement. The drawing was helpful in obtaining an overview over the social and physical structure of the settlement. Furthermore,

[22] Marshall and Rossmann (1999:113-114) talk of "elite" interviews addressing the same method.

[23] *ama samuha* (Nepali): mothers' group; mothers' groups have a longstanding history in Nepal and exist in many localities from the Terai to the mountain area. *Ama* in Nepali means mother as well as old, wise, respected woman. Usually, only women with children are members of these groups, exceptions may be made. Socially, the fact that only mothers and not all women may participate, is explicable by the fact that the Nepali society is a patrilocal society (see chap. 3.1). Mothers' groups may give married women back some of the solidarity they lost with the close contact of their own families.

two focus groups[24] discussions were conducted. As the data collection period was during the labour intensive season of harvest, it was very difficult to organise such meetings. Yet, the few discussions that were conducted affirmed the usefulness of this method. In the following, the methods applied are discussed in detail.

4.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

As this study focuses on gender relations it was considered to be most fruitful to concentrate on married people. Spouses interact with each other daily, they have to organise their household and they often have to bring together their individual interests. Even if not all household members live together in one house (due to migration, for instance), they cooperate and conflict.[25] Thus, the interactions between a husband and a wife generally are more intensive than between any man and any woman of a village. Therefore, matrimony was considered a space of special interest to this study. The following target groups were identified:

- Female spouses whose partners work or worked in a foreign country
- Male spouses who worked in a foreign country or currently did so and at the moment of field visit were on home-leave
- Female spouses whose partners have never been abroad for employment
- Male spouses who have never been abroad

Both female and male spouses were interviewed. Talking with women and men should allow identifying biases. Women may perceive changes from a different perspective than do men or/and highlight other changes at all. In total, 57 women and 39 men were interviewed.

Furthermore, a representative sample concerning *jat* was intended and reached: Out of a total of approximately 120 Gurung-, 50 Dalit- and 30 Brahmin-households 52 Gurungs, 25 Dalits and 18 Brahmins

[24] I basically draw upon Morgan's (1997) definition of focus groups.

[25] The theoretical background for this assumption lays in the concept of "Cooperative Conflicts" of Sen (1990; see also Wilson 1991:31; Rodenburg 2000:243 and chap. 2.1.5).

were interviewed. Informants have not been selected in the narrower sense but were approached in their houses unannounced. If there was nobody at home – which was often the case – we turned back later on or another day or tried to reach them at work in the fields. Interviews lasted from 15 minutes to more than one hour.

In the last two weeks, selected persons were frequented a second time to ask questions that had been left out the first time. This was only done with interviewees who provided decided statements and obviously had enjoyed the interview. Very often, these second interviews went on for another 45 minutes.

Interview guidelines. The interview guidelines were composed of open questions concerning the itemised subject areas mentioned below. Open questions were preferred to allow a rather narrative form of the interviews – the most appropriate way addressing personal matters as informants should feel as free as possible to relate whatever they counted important. This approach further supported the explorative character of the study.

4.3.2. Focus groups

The advantages of group discussions compared to individual interviews are as following: First, people can speak freely and feel more comfortable talking to each other than talking to a foreign interviewer and her interpreter. Second, very ordinary things like labour division or decision-making, which normally are poorly reflected, may be easier to discuss in groups (Morgan 1997:10). And third, "the format allows the facilitator the flexibility to explore unanticipated issues as they arise in the discussion" (Marshall & Rossmann 1999:115).

From the group dynamic effects resulting from the direct interaction of participants, two benefits were expected: First, the findings should allow control over results of individual interviews. Second, new disputed fields that for some reason have been left unmentioned in the individual interviews should be covered. Moreover, the combination of two different research methods declines the possibility of a method bias and facilitates to approach an issue from different perspectives.

Organisation of the focus groups. The community's president was asked to call selected people to participate in the meeting. Criterions for selection of participants were their interest in the topic and their promising answers in previous interviews. In order to facilitate fruitful discussions, groups were composed homogeneously to build upon a common background as well as heterogeneously to disclose discrepancies and more detailed information. Thus, the groups were homogenous concerning their migration situation and gender and heterogeneous concerning their jat and age. Hence, two female groups with five and four participants respectively were built. The first group discussion was held with Gurung women having their husbands working abroad. The second group was a four-member heterogeneous group. This included two women whose husbands never went abroad (one was Dalit, one Brahmin), a Gurung woman whose husband had returned from foreign employment some years ago and a Brahmin woman whose husband was in India at that moment. This unintended heterogeneity concerning migration situation in the later group and the homogeneity referring to *jat* in the former group resulted from the fact that other women than expected showed up to participate. Whereas the homogeneity did not hamper discussions, the heterogeneity made it quite difficult to develop a discussion because it could not be built on a common ground. For organisational reasons it was not possible to form a men's group.

People were gathered at a *chautara*[26] A chautara is a circular resting and meeting place built of stones around a shadow-spending tree. at the village centre. As we were meeting in this public place, the discussion was held with a few listeners. The discussion was expected to develop with very open questions. The role of the researcher was to moderate the discussion. The discussions were tape recorded[27] to prevent the interviewers from being absorbed by taking notes.

[26] A *chautara* is a circular resting and meeting place built of stones around a shadow-spending tree.

[27] As far as my impression, the women did not feel embarrassed by the presence of the tape recorder.

Discussion guidelines. In order to compare individual interviews with group discussions, more or less the same questions were asked again in a more general form. So again, the issues of labour division and decision-making were investigated along with additional questions about migration and its personal consequences for them and implications for the household.

4.3.3. Structured interviews: semi-structured tables

Despite the open character of questions in semi-structured interviews, answers often were brief. For this reason the method of "semi structured tables" was developed to facilitate more information. These tables provide structured questions breaking down an open, general question into subcategories and categories of answers. On the other hand, asking further questions extended the table and unexpectedly extensive answers were noted and included in analysis, too.

The following issues were addressed with semi-structured tables:

- **Social norms on the gendered labour division**: It can be assumed that asking about social norms and restrictions leads to a rather homogenous set of answers as the knowledge asked is an objective one. So there should be a certain consensus within the society about these norms and restrictions. Therefore, only eight informants were interviewed in total. As it is probable that at least in some tasks there would be jat specific differences, two Dalits, two Brahmins and four Gurungs were asked, half of it being women and half men.
- **Women's and men's workload**: Interviews were conducted with 12 women and four men (ten Gurungs, four Dalits and two Brahmins) in order to gain an impression of the daily workload people have to manage. Responses show that there is a seasonal and gender specific variation in work burden.
- **Women's and men's participation in decision-making**: Interviews with 15 women and eleven men (15 Gurungs, six Dalits and five Brahmins) should facilitate an overview over the roles different household members play in decision-making processes.

4.4. Data analysis methodology

Becker-Schmid and Bilden (1995:28) write that the process of research – especially during the analysis stage – oscillates between identifying praxis and opinions of informants and the reflections on the researcher's own views. The research process further oscillates between commitment, identification with the interviewed women (but also anger on them) and a distance that allows an objective distance. Particularly interviewing women and men about gender equality and analysing these data was a challenge in this sense. When own interpretations and values contest with the ones interviewees expressed, it is not easy to find the balance between giving those interviewed a voice and putting them in a broader context and interpret it differently. Therefore, it is possible that a theory explaining some phenomena developed out of empirical material does not match with the theory informants have about this phenomena (Gerhardt 1995:435).

Quantitative data consisted of keywords taken during the interviews. A part of the notes was transferred to an excel-file in order to perform descriptive statistic procedures to obtain an overview. The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews were keywords of the interpreter's translation of the answers given by informants. The focus group discussions were taped and later on transcribed (translation and transcription was done in one step). To interpret and analyse qualitative data, codification seemed to be the most appropriate and promising method. As the data obtained from the structured interviews consisted as one part of already coded answers, this step was redundant for these data.

To interpret qualitative data, it is useful to remember the limitations of interviews. As Marshall and Rossmann (1999:108-110) point out, interviewees may be unwilling or feel uncomfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences. They may have good reasons not to be truthful. On the other hand, the researcher "may not properly comprehend responses to the questions or various elements of the conversation" (Marshall & Rossmann 1999:110). Furthermore, the

relationship between experience and the type of information that can be given in interviews may have an important effect on the quality of the answer. Wilson (1991:32) points out three different situations:

1) The personal experience of the interviewed person is the same like the public account. In this case it is easy to answer – there is nothing to hide.
2) In the second case, in contrast, the private account is not the same as the public. In this case it may be difficult to collect data because the informant may wish to appear "better" than she or he really is or hide information.

Sometimes it may be the case that an experience cannot be expressed because there are no words available to adequately express the experience. Wilson (1991:35-36) summarises: "(…) the accessibility of information is related to the degree of threat to the dominant ideology that is involved in thinking about it. Even when the issue is not very threatening there may still be no accurate public account of the situation."

Wilson (1991) omits to draw a conclusion of her considerations and leaves open the question as to how the researcher can face this challenge adequately. In fact, in research, exactly the opinions and experiences that do not correspond with social ideology often are of special interest.

Having these constraints in mind, data was coded. The code building and attributing process was an iterative procedure. In a first step, approximately half of all 96 interviews were transcribed and coded. With the help of the computer programme Atlas.ti[28], codes were related to referring parts, sentences or paragraphs of these text files. To create the codes, Strauss' method of theoretical codification (Flick 1998:197-206) was applied. In a first step, codes were built continuously out of the material, having in mind the issues to analyse. Codes were built for every relevant passage. After a first interpretation, these

[28] The computer programme Atlas.ti facilitates the quick search for required codes, allowing assortment of all text passages referring to one or several codes. The programme further enables scientists to combine different codes verifying if they are related with each other or not.

codes were further divided into sub-codes. Then, a second interpretation step followed to test the codes and allow first conclusions. The other half of the interviews were subsequently attributed to accordant codes and integrated in the interpretation process. This iterative procedure allowed adjusting and modifying codes.

Full data anonymity was not considered necessary, as the matter of interest is little sensitive. Anyhow, all respondents were informed about the use and dissemination of the data and gave consent for using their declarations for this purpose. Yet, the issue as to what extent participants can ever be fully informed is a disputed one.[29] It cannot be assumed that all participants have a detailed appreciation of the nature and aims of academic research (Sin 2005:281). Moreover, according to Rock (2001:7), researchers should be aware of the scope of the consent given by informants. Fully acknowledging these claims, names were partially concealed by only disclosing surnames. The surnames are considered important as they reveal the person's *jat*.

[29] For a more detailed discussion on the issue of data protection see Kaspar and Müller-Böker (2005).

5. Impact of out-migration for labour on gender relations in Kalabang

After getting familiar with the broader context of the issues at central interest (see chap. 3), the theories (chap. 2) and methods (chap. 4), we now enter the core analysis of this thesis. The current chapter first gives an introduction to the case study site – to Kalabang village (chap. 5.1). chap. 5.2 and 5.3 focus on labour division and participation in decision-making, resepctively – the two dimensions of gender relations treated in this study – and trace the dynamics evoked by migration. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings (chap. 5.4) in which the results are put into a broader context (labour division) or viewed from another perspective (decision-making), respectively.

The space of time that will be relevant to this study includes three stages of migration:

- **Pre-migration**: This first stage of migration is viewed as the basis for comparison to analyse the impacts of out-migration for labour on workloads. Husbands have not been abroad yet or never went until the point of time of field visit. Hence, data is based on interviews conducted on the one side (a) with wives whose husbands have returned from migration and with returnees and (b) with wives whose husbands were working abroad at time point of inquiry and migrants on home-leave, asking them about their past. On the other side non-migrants were interviewed, too.
- **Migration**: Compared with the first stage of migration, this second stage will show the changes in women's workloads and dynamics in decision-making participation during the absence of their spouses. Returnees and returnees' wives were again asked retrospectively. Included in this stage is the phase where migrants temporarily return for home-leaves.

- **Post-migration**: The third stage of migration is important to analyse the persistence of changes. To what extent does women's workload and participation in decision-making change again when husbands return?

In a society in which migration plays such a fundamental role for people's livelihoods, it is obvious that an analytical division of migration stages as presented above is artificial. Most people have their experience with migration well before they precisely plan to go abroad, as other household or family members are likely to be involved in migration. Furthermore, the stage post-migration can simultaneously be the stage pre-migration: a returnee might plan to leave the village again in order to secure cash income flows. Despite this, the division was necessary to facilitate research.

5.1. Introduction to the study site

In the following a brief description of the case study area's geographical location, its infrastructure and social composition is given as an introduction to the study site (chap. 5.1.1). Further, general aspects of the research project's two core concerns are discussed: gender relations, especially women's position within the household in Kalabang (chap. 5.1.2) and significance of out-migration for labour for the village (chap. 5.1.3). Equipped with these insights, the reader should be ready to understand the discussion of the empirical data that follow this chapter.

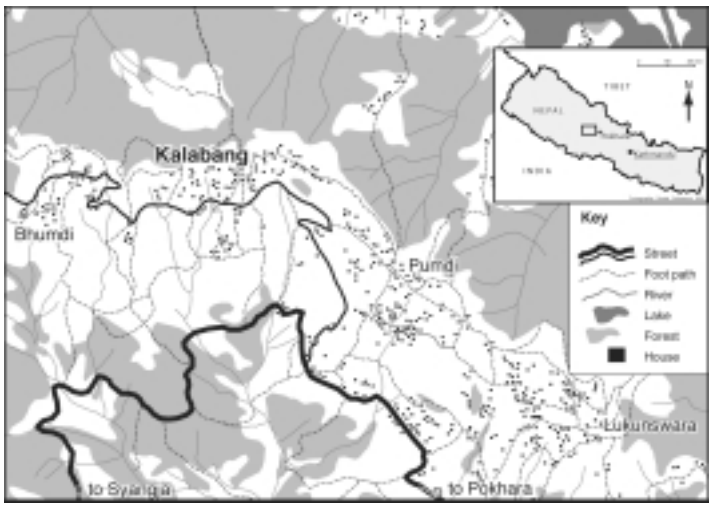
5.1.1. The village's geographical location, its infrastructure and social composition

Geographical location. Kalabang is situated in Kaski District in the Western Development Region in the mid-hill zone of Nepal (see Map 1). Kalabang is the *ward*[30] number 6 in Pumdi Bhumdi Village Development Committee (VDC). Its houses are distributed

[30] A *ward* is the smallest administrative entity of Nepal. 9 *wards* are subsumed to one VDC (Central Bureau of Statistics 2002:3).

between an altitude of 1,280 and 1,420 metres above sea level. The next town is situated little less than 10 kilometres away from Kalabang and is reachable within a 15 minutes walk plus a 20 minutes bus drive. Buses pass frequently, as the road is the main connection from Pokhara to Syangja and further down to India. The proximity to Pokhara facilitates occasional visits to the town. Many people travel monthly to Pokhara for purchasing purposes, to visit relatives or fetch a pension. Few people even work in Pokhara and return the same evening. Others work there and only return on weekends and holidays. Some families moved permanently to the town but kept the land in Kalabang and continue to cultivate it.

Map 1: The village Kalabang and its location within the national context

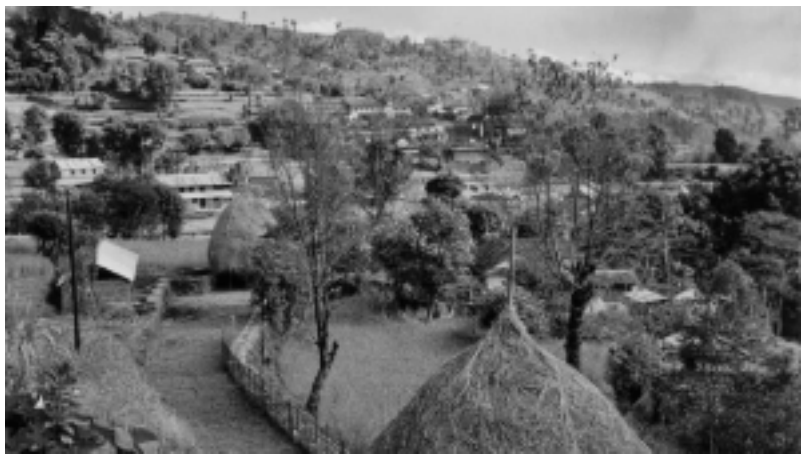


Source of the map of Kalabang and surrounding: HMG, Survey Department, Sheet No. 2883 16B, 1998.
Source of the map of Nepal: adapted from Kollmair (1999).

The climate is characterised by Adhikari and Seddon (2002:1-8) as humid sub-tropical.[31] The Pokhara valley has the highest rainfall within Nepal. Some 80% of precipitation occurs during the four summer months between June and September resulting in frequent landslides. In autumn, hailstorms occur occasionally, resulting in vast damage to crops of people relying on agriculture – which affects nearly everybody in Kalabang.

[31] For detailed information on climate, vegetation, geomorphology and hydrology see Gurung (1965).

Photo 1: The village Kalabang (view towards north-east)

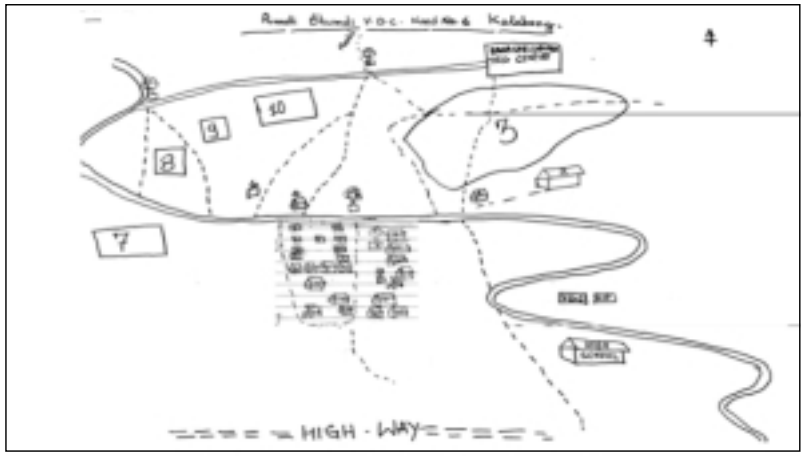


Infrastructure. In Kalabang, seven to eight households share one water tap. Most households dispose of a pipeline to the nearby water tap. Hence, instead of fetching water, people only have to connect their pipeline and fill their barrel. An American NGO helped with the construction of 184 public toilets. Apart from five to six households, all houses are provided with electricity. There are three telephones in the village. Paths from the highway up the hill to the village are well mended. Many of them are built up with the money that was collected through *ama samuha. Ama samuha* plays an important and active role for the village maintenance and development. A motor road leading to the highway was under construction at time point of inquiry.

There are three schools in Kalabang. In the primary school, only children from Kalabang are accepted, whereas the high school serves the entire VDC. The third school is a private boarding school called West Point School, which enrols children from three years up until fifth grade. According to an informant, there are only 10-15 children who do not attend school in the entire village. It can be assumed that the number of children who do not attend school regularly is much higher. It is common that children help their parents in the

fields or with household chores during labour intensive seasons. Girls are usually more likely to be abstained from school than boys. Despite this, it can be said that there has been a changed attitude towards education. Whereas there are many adult women in the village who never went to school, today girls generally attend school. Generally, education is considered very important for one's success in life.

Map 2: Mind map of the village, showing the main infrastructure and caste segregation



Key: 2) Bhagwati Primary School; 3) Dalit area; 5) Gurung area; 6) West Point School; 7) Gurung area; 8) Dalit area; 9) Brahmin area; 10) Brahmin area

The VDC's health post is situated in Kalabang. The health post is open every day except Saturdays and on holidays. Once a week two nurses from a hospital in Pokhara and once a month a medic visit the village. Hence, apart from emergencies, people do not have to travel to the town to see a doctor. Women deliver at home, in the health post or travel to a hospital in the town. There is an NGO, which is committed to family planning, distributing contraceptives to every household once a month.

On the hilltop there is a training centre of a Japanese NGO. The centre provides jobs for 17 persons from Kalabang. These jobs are well appreciated as they guarantee stable cash income. Another Japanese NGO is working in Kalabang on community development and forest and watershed conservation. Former NGO's provided

capacity building by giving training in agriculture, reforestation and personal health. Some training courses have also been organised by His Majesty's Government (HMG). Besides, ama samuha conducts courses to empower women. Furthermore, there are five self-governing user groups in the village: a community forest user group, a drinking water committee, *ama samuha, ama milan kendra*[32] and the environment conservation club.

Social composition. Approximately 1,450 persons live in the village. An average household consists of 6.5 members. Table 5 shows the jat specific variation in household size. Little less than half of the households are extended households. Extended households (or 3-generations households) are characterised as a couple with their children living with the husband's parents and possibly with other male married siblings and their families and female unmarried siblings (Macfarlane 1976:330-333; see also Fig. 4). Macfarlane (1976) uses the term "joint family". I prefer to speak of "households" as conceptions of "family" vary considerably. In this study, the term household is used to describe the institution of kin related persons sharing a common roof, a common pot and a common purse.[33] This definition is largely concordant with interviewees' understanding. Yet, there are circumstances, which cause aberrations from this ideal. Out-migration for labour, e.g. does not allow common meals and separates household members' residence location and purses. Nevertheless, migrants are considered household members.[34]

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[32] *Ama milan kendra* is another "mothers group", the name can roughly be translated with "bringing women together".

[33] For an extensive discussion on the household term see Kaspar and Kollamir (forthcoming), Thüler (2002), Gray (1995), Agergaard (1999), Koning et al. (2000).

[34] To address extended households, who have one or several married brothers working abroad and their wives and children living in their parents-in-law's house, Macfarlane (1976:331) suggests to use the term "stem" household, a term which was commonly applied on European household structures. There is no local term to address what we call "nuclear family": spouses living with their children in one household (2-generations household). This is astonishing as Macfarlane (1976:333) estimates that nuclear households make up 2/3 of the households in the two settings he researched in the Kaski district. I will employ this term in spite of the lacking equivalent in Nepali. Macfarlane (1976:333) also names a term for nuclear households with migrants: the broken nuclear household. I will not use the terms "stem household" and "broken nuclear household" in order to keep it simple. It will anyway be clear when I am talking of households experiencing migration, as this is the main subject of this study.

People of three different jats live in Kalabang. The group of the Gurung is the dominant jat in Kalabang (see Tab. 6).[35] With approximately 150 households, Gurungs make up almost two thirds of Kalabang's population. 50 more households belong to Dalits and 30 to Brahmins. Map 2 shows the manifestation of the *jat* segregation in the settlement. Although people of different *jats* do frequently interact with each other, particularly by working together in the fields, interactions are not free of conflicts (see chap. 5.2). Hierarchies along the *jat* structure are still existent despite the legal abolition of the caste system and prohibition of caste discrimination in the year 1963 (Keane 2004; Müller-Böker 1998:18).

Tab. 5: Average household size in Kalabang, according to *jat*

Jat	Average number of household members
Gurung	5.8
Dalit	6.6
Brahmin	7.7
Overall	**6.5**

Note1: The data is based on interviews with 26 Gurungs, 15 Dalits and 13 Brahmins.

Note2: The main criterion to count a person was her or his residence. Thus, married daughters were not counted to the household, married sons only if they still lived with their parents. Contrariwise, migrants were counted, as they were perceived by informants to belong to the household.

Tab. 6: Social structure of the village Kalabang

Jat	Approximate number of households	% of the total population
Gurung	150	61
Dalit	50	23
Brahmin	30	16
Total	**230**	**100**

Note: The data is based on interviews with two elder men.

[35] For a detailed description of the Gurungs see Pignède (1993), Macfarlane (1976) and Adhikari and Seddon (2002).

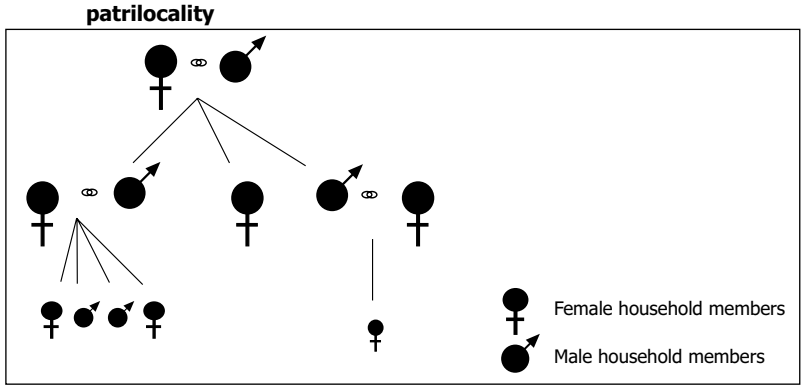
5.1.2. Gender relations – women's position within the household

Within the household, a woman can be granddaughter, daughter, daughter-in-law or wife of the household head. Usually, a woman lives through all three positions in this order, possibly followed by the position of a widow. Persons who do not marry are very rare. The position a woman holds within the household (among other factors) determines her status. In this way, the position of a woman within the household affects her workload and decision-making power. Women's positions within the household are largely shaped by patrilocality. The institution of *patrilocality* means that after the wedding the young wife leaves her *maiti* [36] and moves to her parents-in-law's household (ghar). She is not only a stranger in the household but mostly is unfamiliar with the village. Some women at least can count on the support of relatives. Besides the distinct situation women come across, women cope very differently with this situation of being a stranger. Some women in Kalabang have very little friends in the village, even after having been living there for several years. In contrast, others had only been living for few months in Kalabang and yet said that "everybody in the village is friend." However, the majority of women do not have maiti and therefore highly depend on the husband's networks in the village (Thieme et al. forthcoming). Thus, a husband's absence can further increase a wife's isolation within the village as well as within the household. Fig. 4 illustrates the wives' position within a Nepali household. The illustration highlights the role a husband plays for his wife when they are living in extended household. A husband is the connecting link between his wife and his parents. Therefore, most women miss their husbands when they migrate. A group discussion unexpectedly revealed how women feel when their husbands come on home-leave. It is comprehensible that women – and also men – get excited when they see each other after such a long time. A 45-year old Gurung woman narrated:

[36] *Maiti* (Nepali): a married woman's paternal household; a married woman's own relatives.

"When they [our husbands] come we are very happy and we feel shy like a new bride (laughs). We can't explain how happy we are and we feel very very shy. (…). I've become old now but still I feel the same way."

Fig. 4: Typical Nepali extended household, following the concept of patrilocality



Marriage, divorce and polygyny. Most Gurung women marry at an age between 15 and 22 years.[37] Brahmin and Dalit women generally get married younger. In Kalabang, age difference among Gurung spouses is an average of 4 years, among Dalits 8.5 years and among Brahmins 10.3 years. Polygyny is rare in Kalabang. When it occurs, it mostly leads to the break up of the first marriage, at least temporarily.

Out-migration for labour does not appear to have any effects on marriage break ups. Most women and men stated that they did not fear their spouse's infidelity during migration. Although there are individual cases in the village, most respondents said that they did not know about such cases in the village. A Gurung woman reported her husband that she had been asked whether she feared that he would marry another wife during his foreign employment in India. He replied:

"Why should I marry again? I am already married. Yet, marrying is not enough. You also have to feed your wife!"

[37] According to Pignède (1993:240) 48% of women marry at an age of 15-18 and 39% are 19-22 years old. Pignède conducted his study in 1958. It can be assumed that marital age of women has slightly augmented in recent years. My interpreter – being a Gurung herself and living in the nearby town – explained that the average age to marry for Gurung women was around 20.

The Gurung man's reaction expresses a common attitude towards marriages. A husband, being the household head, takes on the formal responsibility to look after all household members. Polygyny is also a question of financial means. Besides, polygyny is not connected with a high social status and thus not viewed as desirable. The possibility of escape of a spouse with another woman or man respectively does not appear to frighten many people, although some indicated certain doubts.[38]

Whereas out-migration for labour is hardly a cause of marriage break up's, domestic violence is a reason for de facto divorce, where spouses cease to live in the same household. Violence occurs frequently among Dalits and also among Brahmins but is rare in Gurung households. Often, wives who are beaten stay with their husbands, return to them after having escaped or accept them again after a time of separation. The reason for this loyalty is rather the lack of alternatives than a reconciliation or improvement of husband's behaviour, as the cases of two women in Kalabang revealed.

Perception of discrimination. When men were asked about their attitudes towards women's discrimination, they all replied that men and women were equal. They admitted that in former times, there was gender discrimination, but nowadays, girls were equally sent to school – thus women and men were equal. Women partly shared this appraisal. Yet, some women thought that there was gender discrimination and specified that women were paid smaller wages, could not express their interests at home, did not speak up at ward meetings or were not respected by other villagers when employing labourers.

Further research into the area of perception and understanding of discrimination would have provided interesting insights, as this is an important aspect when looking at gender equality (see e.g. Austen et al. 2003). This complex issue could not be elaborated further

[38] The issue of prostitution was not addressed in interviews.

within the scope of this research project but is a good starting point for further activities. Especially the confrontation of the researcher's understanding of gender equality to the one informants have will surely evolve interesting findings. It is furthermore a productive step in order to control, improve and revise own definitions, explanations and opinions.

5.1.3. Livelihoods in Kalabang

People's livelihoods in Kalabang rely mainly on three main pillars: housekeeping, subsistence agriculture and wage employment (for a definition of the terms, see chap. 5.2). Housekeeping is the sector, which produces the preconditions for the other two sectors. The other two sectors play both a major role for the household members' livelihoods. The majority of Kalabang's households make a living by combining the two sectors. A combination is necessary because to concentrate on one of them for most people is not possible. Relying on one sector only is not adequate, as on the one side the output of the fields is not sufficient and on the other, there are not enough permanent jobs or salaries are too low. In the following, labour patterns in Kalabang in each of these three sectors are briefly described.

Housekeeping. It was responded that babies require their mother 24 hours a day. Small children are hardly taken along when working in the fields. Hence, as women are responsible for the children's attendance, their capacity to work in agriculture is limited, unless they can leave their children with their mothers-in-laws, which indeed often is the case. Besides childcare, agriculture, looking after the livestock and storing are the most labour intensive tasks. These tasks are mainly performed by women (see also chap. 5.2).

Subsistence agriculture. The slope of the hills make terrace construction in Kalabang indispensable. For the irrigation of their *khet* [39], farmers depend on rain. Artificial irrigation is not possible.

[39] *Khet* (Nepali) = irrigated field.

The poor irrigation facilities and frequent hailstorms in autumn are severe problems for Kalabang's farmers. Nevertheless, agriculture is a very important economic sector as the bulk of Kalabang's inhabitants considerably depend on agriculture, even those people who live in a household where no household member disposes of own land property. An average estate in Kalabang consists of 21.5 *ropani* [40] (including *khet* and *bari* [41]). *Jat* specific values are shown in Tab. 7. People possessing land work in their own fields. Depending on the amount of cultivated land and available human resources among the household members, they might be in need of help of other villagers to get the work done in time. Hence, people work in others' fields on the basis of mutual labour exchange. Relatives, friends or neighbours ask each other for help and reciprocate labour force later on. This system is called *nogar* (Pignède 1993:119-122) in Gurung language.[42] The *nogar*-system is very commonly applied in Kalabang, particularly during the most labour intensive season – the planting and harvesting time.

Tab. 7: Estate according to *jat*

Jat	**Average estate in *ropani***	**Smallest estate in *ropani***	**Biggest estate in *ropani***
Dalit	9	1	35
Brahmin	22.3	1	60
Gurung	27	7	101
Overall	**21.5**		

Note: The data is based on interviews with 42 Gurungs, 11 Brahmins and 10 Dalits.

Additional to the *nogar*-system, people are hired to work the fields in labour intensive seasons. There is a *jat* specific segregation within this agricultural business: Gurungs and Brahmins are the employers and Dalits the employees. This employee-employer-relationship is a

[40] *Ropani* (Nepali) = Nepali square measure. 1 ropani = 509 square metres.

[41] *Bari* (Nepali) = field without barrage to dam water.

[42] Among Chhetris, the same system is called *parma* (Bennett 2002:23). For a description of the *parma*-system see also Müller (1986).

conse quence of the ownership structure. As Dalits possess very little land and therefore are in need of an additional income source and Gurungs on the contrary have much land property, which they do not manage to work themselves alone. E.g. the members of a Gurung household can never manage all the field work on their 101 ropani khet. They have to hire over 150 people during harvest season and even over 200 during plantation time. This household is very wealthy – not only in Kalabang's context.

The *adhiya*-system[43] defines the conditions to take land on lease (for a detailed description of the system see Müller-Böker (1999:71). According to this system, the land tenant has to give 50% of his or her harvest to the landowner.[44] To give the land on lease is a good solution for landowners that are too old to work in the fields and who have no descendants to work in their fields either or who moved to the town of Pokhara. When people are old, their children usually have already moved out with the result that less household members have to live from the output. Fifty percent of the harvest therefore might be enough.

To work in others' fields or take land on lease is a very common strategy particularly among non-migrants. In turn, only few non-migrants do employ people to work in their fields as they often lack the needed cash to hire people.

Local wage employment. Most informants said that the yield of their fields were not enough to nourish all household members throughout the whole year. Hence, other income sources must be made accessible. A very common one is to work on someone's fields for a daily wage. The daily wage is fixed by the community on *rupees*[45] 100 for men and *rupees* 50 for women with adjustments

[43] The term *adhiya* is originally used to characterise land tenure system in the Terai (see e.g. Müller-Böker 1999). However, the systems are similar in the mid-hills and therefore, the term can also be used for this setting.

[44] For explanations on the legal background see Müller (1984).

[45] *Rupees* = Nepali national currency. 100 *rupees* = 1.164 Euro, 17.7.2004 (https://entry.creditsuisse.ch/csfs/p/cb/de/dev_zinsen/kurse_zins/index.jsp).

during harvest and plantation seasons. According to informants, women are paid less because physical capacity was not comparable with men. Men earn more because *"they do the heavier works"* such as ploughing and threshing. This information challenges the findings of Pignède. He states that wages "are the same for all workers, adolescents and adults, men and women, Gurungs and Untouchables" (1993:122). Bennett (2002:23), in contrast, found wage differences between the genders.[46] In harvesting and plantation season, the employers have to provide tea, lunch and dinner in addition to the salary. The preparation of the meals is done by women and can keep them busy the major part of the day, according to the amount of people they have to nourish. Alternative opportunities for wage employment are as following:

- Direct selling of agricultural products
- Permanent jobs provided by a training centre of a Japanese NGO (guards, cooks, cleaners, gardeners)
- Direct selling of manufactured products (especially by Dalits: ironmongery, baskets etc.)
- Jobs in the nearby town

Out-migration for labour. As the above listed income generating opportunities are rare in Kalabang, out-migration for labour is often considered as the only alternative. According to Adhikari and Seddon (2002:221) and Pignède (1993), this situation is typical for Gurung communities of the Central and Western hill zones of Nepal. Informants could date back first cases of out-migration for labour in Kalabang to the World War I.

Between different social groups it is said that there are significant differences concerning the likelihood of out-migration for labour. For Gurungs migration is a widespread strategy to generate additional

[46] According to Bennett (2002:23), a man working in Narikot – a Brahmin/Chhetri settlement – earned 6 *rupees*, 2 measures of flattened rice, midday snacks and a few cigarettes per day in 1975, whereas a woman only earned 3 *rupees* and one and a half measures of flattened rice.

income, whereas Brahmins and Dalits rather stay in the village and chose other options such as taking land on lease. clearly shows this difference referring to former migration. When looking at actual migration at time point of inquiry, it becomes obvious that this pattern is about to change, as the differences between *jats* are diminishing. In total, 250 people were abroad at the time point of inquiry. This figure means that 16.7% of the total population of the village was working abroad. However, not all *jats* are equally engaged in foreign employment as shown in Tab. 8 Gurungs are by far the *jat* that is mostly committed to out-migration for labour.

Tab. 8: Percentage of married women whose husbands are or were abroad

	Current migration	Former migration	Current *or* former migration	No migration	Total of interviewed persons
Gurung	35.9%	48.7%	84.6%	15.4%	**52%** n=39
Dalit	34.8%	30.4%	65.2%	34.8%	**30.7%** n=23
Brahmin	30.8%	15.4%	46.2%	53.8%	**17.3%** n=13
Total	**34.7%** n=26	**37.3%** n=28	**72%** n=54	**28%** n=21	**100%** n=75

Note: n = absolute number of interviewed persons.

If migration in former times and actual migration is subsumed, statistics speak even a clearer language: 84.6% of all interviewed Gurung spouses are directly affected by migration at time point of inquiry or were it before, whereas among Dalits it is 65.2% and among Brahmins 46.2%. Hence, 72% of all couples in Kalabang have chosen migration as a livelihood strategy. This means that little less than three fourths of all married wives live a considerably long part in their lives without their spouses.

Most of the labour migrants are young married men. Yet, there were also single men who were working abroad. There were also a few women who sojourned to foreign countries. They lived with their

families in India, Hong-Kong, Malaysia or Dubai. Singular women were not married yet when they had left the village. Women usually migrate not for working purposes but to join their husbands in order to keep the family together. As a matter of course, this does not mean that they do not work there, but labour is not the main objective for women to migrate. Actually, there was only one woman in Kalabang who was working in Hong-Kong while her husband stayed with the children in the village.

The male predominance in out-migration for labour can be explained with the gendered labour division (see also chap.5.2) and social rules that define the gender relations, as a 48-year old Dalit woman put it:

> *"Because women in this village are not independent until now. They are not allowed to go abroad. They are not well educated so they cannot go abroad."*

Furthermore, it is a man's duty to provide cash income. One very common job opportunity in foreign countries is to enlist for military service in the Indian and British armies. The British army is considered better because the salary is higher but it is harder to get enlisted. Apart from military service, many men work in India in the private civil sector as guards. These findings are concordant with Thieme's (2003) research on migrants in Delhi originating from Far West Nepal. As in other parts of Nepal, the main destination of migration in Kalabang is India, but people also migrate to Gulf countries, to Europe, USA, Hong Kong and Japan (Thieme 2005; Gurung 2001:14; HMG 2002). The destination of India is most frequently chosen because the open border does not require a passport. Furthermore, the journey is relatively cheap, as one can travel by foot or bus (see also chap. 3.2). Nowadays, people prefer to go to Gulf countries such as Qatar, Oman and Saudi Arabia. To get to Gulf countries an agent is usually hired to organise the journey, required documents and a job. Some

men even migrate to developed countries such as Hong Kong, Belgium, UK, USA or Germany.

Men mostly leave the village on their own initiative. Husbands discuss the issue of out-migration with other household members and take the final decision. Mostly, before deciding a husband consults with his wife, sometimes, with his parents as well (particularly when living in extended households). Only a few men decided without discussing it with anyone else. In few cases, fathers-in-law proposed their sons to go abroad and sons discussed it with their wives. Thus, whether to migrate is a decision that is rather made between the spouses than between father and son. There were also wives who proposed their husbands to seek foreign employment because they felt it was hard to bring up all children properly with such a little amount of cash income and agricultural output. Correspondingly, lacking income sources was always the first reason listed. Additionally, many returnees stated that they were more respected in the village since they have been abroad. If a man achieves to go abroad, earns an income and supports his family, he is considered to be successful and his reputation increases. Hence, insufficient output of agriculture is the most pushing factor but it is not the only reason why men migrate – the acquiring of respect can also be a driving factor for out-migration for labour. However, as migration has its history – at least among Gurung societies – out-migration for labour has its fixed place within a man's – and hence within a woman's – life cycle in Kalabang.

5.2. Gendered labour division

The aim of this chapter is to elaborate shifts in the gendered labour division and changes in women's workload due to men's foreign employment. The analysis provides detailed insights into the changes of labour division. In the first approach, chap. 5.2.1 will provide a general analysis of labour division as a culturally determined institution. Having developed the normative background, an in-depth analysis

of the gendered labour division and women's workload and how it is in fact applied is provided. In this analysis, the labour sectors of housekeeping (chap. 5.2.2), agriculture (chap. 5.2.3) and wage employment (chap. 5.2.4) were treated with special attention.[47]

- **Housekeeping**: "domestic activities" (Acharya 1993:126), such as cooking, servicing, laundry, shopping, fetching water, cleaning, childcare, etc.
- **Agriculture**: including working in own fields and working in others' fields on a basis of mutual labour exchange *(nogar)*.
- **Wage employment**: including self-employment (such as selling fuel wood, self-made baskets etc.), occasional and permanent employment in the village (including agricultural labour), permanent employment in the village or the town of Pokhara and foreign employment.

A combination of the migration stages – pre-migration, migration and post-migration – and the labour sectors results in the research matrix presented in Tab. 9. The last chapter (chap. 5.2.5) contains a summary of the findings and a conclusion about the shifts in the gendered labour division throughout the three migration stages.

Tab. 9: Matrix of research categories

			MIGRATION STAGE		
			Pre-migration	**Migration**	**Post-migration**
SUBSISTENCE	Housekeeping				
	Agriculture	Own fields			
		Nogar			
WAGE EMPLOYMENT	Agriculture				
	Self-employment				
	Occasional employment				
	Permanent employment	In Kalabang or Pokhara			
		Out-migration for labour			

[47] The categorisation of labour sectors largely complies with Acharya and Bennett's (1983:8-12) classification.

Increasing workloads for women. Interviewed women characterise their husbands' contribution to everyday work very ambivalently: While some stated that their husbands did everything, others stated that they did nothing. A Gurung woman remembered:

> *"Before my husband left, he did everything: he cooked, cleaned, washed – he did everything he could."*

Other women reported that their husbands worked hard in the fields, but still it was not sufficient to make a living. Therefore, they had to *"send"* their husbands abroad to earn money. By expressing the necessity to send their husbands abroad in order to earn money, wives support the perception of the role of men as breadwinners.

Out-migration for labour has a high impact on the quantity of women's workload. Most women reported increased workloads since their husbands had left. The following statement of an 18-year old Gurung woman is characteristic:

> *"I have more work since my husband left the village because with my husband being abroad, there is one work force missing."*

Some women generally stated that they would do "everything", looking after the household, the children and the fields. A Gurung woman concluded:

> *"The woman has to look after everything when the husband is not present."*

"To look after everything" includes not only the workload but also the responsibility. This can be perceived as an additional burden to the increased workload but also as an avail of freedom (for this discussion see also chap. 5.3).

5.2.1. Cultural habits and constraints

Cultural norms benchmark the way in which everyday life is organised, who is performing which tasks and who takes which responsibilities. Corresponding with Freidberg (2001:7), who demands the deconstruction of "farming (…) into units of analysis appropriate for understanding the dynamics (and broader significance) of variation and change in gender divisions of labor", agriculture was split up in different tasks. As the table indicates, the performance of some tasks is very strictly regulated whereas other tasks are handled more loosely. It can be assumed that tasks, which are very strictly divided along the gender structure, are afflicted with more dramatic consequences in case of violation. This explains why for the completion of some tasks all women employ men when there is no male person in their household to do it. For a more detailed description of agricultural tasks and non-agricultural occupations see Pignède (1993:101-131, 142-145).

Tab. 10 : Typical labour division by gender in Kalabang

	Tasks performed by women	Tasks performed by men
Tasks exclusively done by one gender	• Planting seedlings	• Ploughing fields • Terrace construction and maintenance Road construction
Tasks particularly done by one gender	• Storing grains • Washing clothes • Uprooting seedlings • Weeding crops • Hauling manure • Fetching fodder • Fetching fuel wood • Fetching water • House cleaning and maintenance	• Masonry and carpentry work • Threshing • Attending *ward* meetings • House repairing • Land levelling (after ploughing) • Fund raising for community activities Exchanging news
Tasks rather done by one gender	• Feeding the animals • Cleaning the animal shed • Childcare • Caring of sick family members	• Collecting crops • Irrigation • Tending the animals • Contributing in community activities
No bias evident	• Hauling grains • Carrying grass home • Harvesting crops Digging the fields	

Note: The data is based on eight semi-structured tables with four Gurungs (two women, two men), two Dalits (one woman, one man) and two Brahmins (one woman and one man).

According to, ploughing the fields, terrace construction and maintenance and road construction are exclusively done by men throughout all *jats* whereas masonry and carpentry work, threshing, attending *ward* meetings, house repairing, land levelling, fund raising and exchanging news are rather, although not exclusively, done by men. It can be assumed that respondents referred to the official and formal exchange of information at community meetings when answering the respective question as women were also found passing news informally while working in the fields or washing clothes. There are tasks that follow a clear gender division but are not afflicted with any consequences if it is performed by the opposite gender. For instance, men do feeding animals if there is no woman available and women attend *ward* meetings if there is no man available.

For a few tasks *jat* specific differences are evident. As they are important to understand women's and men's workload, they are presented in the following. One of these tasks is land levelling. Dalit and Brahmin informants all answered that men and women always got land levelling done by male persons. Some Gurung informants, in contrast, responded that men usually did this, while other Gurungs said that land levelling was equally done by women and men. The daily *pujas*[48] are always done by women in all *jats*. The task of processing food grains is stated as not being gender restricted by Gurungs and Brahmins but as strictly females' work by Dalits. Digging the fields, feeding animals, cleaning animal shed and caring of sick family members were perceived as equally done by men and women by the Brahmin meanwhile the Gurung and Dalit informants tended to characterise these tasks as female work.

The reasons for which a task is only performed by women or men might allow a deeper insight into cultural values and rules, particularly the concepts of "male" and "female" that people have. Informants listed the following reasons for gender exclusivity of some tasks:

- Knowledge: *"Women have always planted the seedlings, so they know how to do it".*

[48] *Puja* (Nepali) = divine service.

- Tradition/habit: *"No woman has ever plough a field".*
- Physical strength: *"For physical reasons".*

As a matter of course, it is not self-explanatory which task is heavy and which is not. Freidberg (2001:20) concludes that "the redefinition of what is *physically* 'men's work' or 'women's work' must be understood in the context of changing economic conditions, power relations and social norms both within and beyond the household" (accentuation in the original).

Concerning ploughing, some informants can give more specific explanations: It is a belief from the very beginning that there will be soil erosion if a woman ploughs the field. However, most informants were not sure about the effective consequences of the ignorance of the rule, as the following often heard statement indicates:

"Until now, nobody did it, so how can I know what would happen?"

Other interviewees presume that people would gossip and one informant added that there were women who ploughed in the village – they had become leaders of the Communist Party. With this statement the man emphasises that ploughing women are outsiders. Surprisingly, the misty knowledge about the consequences has no impact on the binding character of the rule. Everybody appears to agree that ploughing women would probably no longer be integrated in the society. This common knowledge might be the reason why a rule persists over generations.

Housekeeping (fetching fodder and fuel wood, washing clothes, cooking etc.) and childcare are viewed as feminine tasks and mainly performed by women, irrespective of the husbands' presence. Therefore, not many changes are expected in this labour sector when husbands migrate. Tasks, which are done by men, in contrast, might pose difficulties to wives when their husbands migrate. If there is no other male person in the household to replace the husband to do the male work he used to do before he left, she will either have to do it herself or be obliged to pay a man from the village in order to

get the work done. Doing it herself would mean violation of the social norms. Therefore, in order to stick to social norms, the alternative way of hiring a male labourer is usually chosen. Apart from social constraints, an objective to employ people is to limit women's workload. Many people already were employing villagers when the husband was still in the village. Insofar, for most women the shifts concerning work pattern are not of a basic character but gradual ones.

The gendered labour division in Kalabang largely corresponds with the findings from former studies of Bennett (2002), Macfarlane and Gurung (1992) and Pignède (1993). It is assumed that gender relations among Gurungs are more egalitarian than among Hill-castes (Macfarlane & Gurung 1992:25-27; Pignède 1993:247; see also chap. 3.1.1). Pignède concludes that borders of female and male tasks are fluid: "Men and women each have jobs that are their own. But no one laughs at a man or woman who does work usually reserved for the opposite sex" (1993:264). In Kalabang, this is also valid for Brahmins and Dalits. By analysing data that contains information on norms and traditions, it should be kept in mind that there always exists a gap between norms and practice. In empirical research, the challenge is to understand, if the respondent refers to norm or practice. Furthermore, some fields of action are more open than others. Ploughing the field, e.g. appears as a strictly ruled field of action whereas childcare is an open one. According to Giddens' (1997) theory of structuration, the structures (rules and norms) are interdependent with the actions of people. Structures are not – as functionalist or structuralist approaches assume – outside of humans. They rather are inside every actor as traces of memory and knowledge about social rules (Giddens 1997:77-78). A norm thus is as powerful as people stick to it. Furthermore, why a task is considered as female or male is withdrawn from people's awareness, precisely for the internalisation of these structures, rules and norms. Therefore, it is not surprising that for most of the tasks, informants could not rationalise their appraisal.

It can be concluded that the society of Kalabang knows a clear division of labour along the gender structure. To define a task as female or male posed no problems to all interviewees. Despite this, the appraisal of the tasks as female or male did not correspond and thus is not self-evident at all.

5.2.2. Housekeeping

In the following, housekeeping and childcare is analysed in detail. As structured interviews revealed, housekeeping and childcare are seen as female tasks (see chap.5.2.1). Surprisingly, the semi-structured interviews presented a remarkable effective variance concerning gender division. A description of this variability follows the outline of wives' day-to-day activities.

Women go up early in the morning to get everything done before going to the fields. After getting up, they perform the *puja*, prepare tea, feed the animals, prepare lunch and serve it to household members who in the meanwhile also get up. Then women clean the dishes and the kitchen, get their children ready for school and finally go to the fields. They return in the afternoon, possibly do the laundry or take care of the children who return from school. Later, they prepare dinner, clean up and possibly have some mending or storing to be done.

Tab. 11 shows that the most time consuming tasks are agriculture and collecting fodder and fuel wood (according to the season), followed by cooking.

Tab. 11: Wives' everyday activities

Activity	Time exposure per day	Supported by other household members
Childcare	0-24h, according to the age of children	Mother-in-law, husband
Collecting fodder and fuel wood	Wide range, from less than 1h to 6h (less in summer time)	Husband, daughters
Agriculture	- Harvest/plantation season: 8h - Other seasons: 3-4h	Husband, father-in-law
Doing the laundry	15min-1h (up to 3h with babies)	Husband, daughters, rarely sons as well
Cooking	2-4h	Husband, daughters
Cleaning	10min-1h	Daughters
Fetching water	0h	
Purchasing	10min	Daughters, sons
Performing the *puja*	30min	

Key: h: hours, min: minutes
Note: The data is based on 17 semi-structured tables (with 13 women and four men) and individual semi-structured interviews.

In the following, some specifications are added to explain some figures of :

- **Cooking**. In contrast to the declarations of several women, who stated that their husband did the cooking sometimes, a Dalit woman claimed that men never did the cooking. They rather would sit and wait than start cooking when they get home early. This non-conformance of responses can be generalised for housekeeping. The non-conformance underlines the existing variance in the individual behaviour. This variance again, indicates the wide range of accepted behaviour. There are no clear *jat* specific differences.
- **Doing the laundry**. Although washing clothes is viewed as a female work, some men related doing the laundry sometimes. Few even stated that they always washed their clothes. Daughters are likely to help as well. In some households, where all children already went to school, everybody washed their own clothes.

- **Fetching water**. The fact that no time is needed for fetching water might surprise the reader. In the literature, it is often stressed how time consuming fetching water is and how much women are burdened with it. Yet, in Kalabang most of the households have a pipeline to fill the reservoir on their veranda.
- **Purchasing**. Shopping is no big business, too. There are three shops in the village. Villagers therefore do not have to travel to provide foodstuffs and other common objects. It is common to send children.
- **Fetching fodder**. In summertime people need less time for the collection of fodder because they can collect grass in the fields. In wintertime on the contrary, people have to walk to the forest for grass. Moreover, people are very busy working in the fields and therefore have not much time to collect fodder.[49] The wife, sometimes daughters, mother-in-law and/or the husband help mostly do this.
- **Childcare**. The effort for childcare is highly dependent on the age of the children: Whereas a baby requires her mother the *"whole day"*, older children have not to be attended much.

When daughters are older, the effort for housekeeping for women decreases because daughters support them. They are washing their own clothes, they do the cooking, cleaning and/or shopping or help collect fodder – girls being considerably more involved in housekeeping than boys, as the following statement of a Gurung woman elucidates:

> *"Now, my daughter is helping me with cooking and washing. The sons don't help in household work because the daughter manages to do it."*

Hence, sons are only meant to help in the house when girls are overloaded. This leaves the boys with more spare time for schoolwork or to roam around and embeds girls from the very childhood in housekeeping. Besides daughters, a wife gets support from her

[49] Müller (1986) provides a detailed analysis of livestock rearing in connection with the use of forest.

husband. Husbands might lend a helping hand in cooking, they might wash their cloths and occasionally collect fodder and fuel wood. Mothers-in-law can also be of considerable support for wives, e.g. by looking after the children.

A task, which was not listed in Tab. 11, but revealed to be important, is taking care of sick household members. Several women explained that women usually took care of sick household members because they knew their children best, they knew what was wrong with them and understood them best. Only when someone has to be taken to the hospital, do husbands take on active role by accompanying the patient to the town. There are buses going from Phedi Khola down the highway to the town of Pokhara but there are no public transport facilities from Kalabang to Phedi Khola. Hence, a taxi has to be called or – if money for the taxi is not available – the sick person has to be carried all the way down to the highway. Men accompany patients to the hospital or doctor because carrying is considered a physically heavy task and because women must be available at home, as they *"have to look after the household"*.

Living with parents-in-law can alleviate a wife's workload. Mothers-in-law often look after the children when a daughter-in-law has to work in the fields or go to the forest. On the other hand, generally more work is accumulated in extended households as there are more household members than in nuclear households. Daughters-in-law complete a major part of this work. Furthermore, parents-in-law can also cause an additional work burden when they have to be tended.

When husbands migrate for jobs, their support in the day-to-day management of the household ceases to exist. The majority of interviewed women stressed the increase of their workload since their husbands had gone. Women felt that they "have to look after everything". With one adult less, the household members become more vulnerable. Any unexpected incident could result in grave problems as there is not much scope for the members staying home,

as they are embedded in a strictly organised time schedule in order to get the everyday work done from dusk to dawn. Many women worried about what would happen if their mother-in-law or their children fell sick.

When husbands return from out-migration, they lend a helping hand in household chores again. Some occasionally cook, others wash clothes or look after the children. However, compared to non-migrants, returnees' wives clearly mentioned husbands' help less. Hence, compared with migration stage, women face only little changes concerning housekeeping and childcare when their husbands return from abroad. Women referred on changes, but these changes rather were the consequence of changes of the household members, such as the growing up of children. However, women feel relieved when their husbands return because husbands support them in other types of work such as agriculture (see chap. 5.2.3).

As informants declared day-to-day management of the household as a women's task, it was expected that women would not experience much change when their husbands migrate. Indeed, contrasting with agriculture, housekeeping was hardly mentioned by women relating about changes of their everyday activities since their husbands had left. Even though, housekeeping was seldom mentioned, changes can be expected. Women stated that their husbands helped them in housekeeping and childcare before they had left. Hence, their workforce in housekeeping and childcare has to be replaced. If wives themselves do not relate about changes, either someone else replaces the husbands' workforce or respondents were not conscious about the increased workload they had to manage. Interviewees did not verify the former presumption and the latter is unlikely. Therefore, a third explanation is considered plausible. It is striking, how many women compliment their husbands on their help in *"everything"* – nevertheless, their absence is hardly noticed in reference to work burden. It is thus likely that husbands used to support their wives only sporadically but in labour intensive times when support is most urgently needed.

Therefore, husbands' support is well appreciated and might sometimes be (quantitatively) overstated. Another reason why no changes are noted by informants might be the fact that with migrant spouses less work is accumulated in housekeeping – there is less food to prepare, less clothes to wash etc. In this way, the tasks which a woman has to take on due to her husband's absence are outbalanced by the decrease in the overall accumulated work.

5.2.3. Subsistence agriculture

As shown in chapter 5.2.1, agricultural work in Kalabang is gendered. Women plant and uproot seedlings, store grains, weed crops and haul manure, whereas men plough the fields, level the land, construct and maintain the terraces and collect the crops. The latter is of marginal importance as most of the fields depend on rain. Hauling grains, carrying grass home, harvesting crops and ploughing the fields are done by both men and women. Overall, women and men share the agricultural work according to a defined pattern. Therefore, in agriculture men's absence has more impact on women's workloads than in day-to-day management of the household. Hence, many interviewees stated that they had to work more in the fields because of out-migration for labour. A Gurung woman complained about her workload:

> *"Since my husband has gone, I have to work in the field every day. I have no choice, I have to."*

Many women would be happy if they could concentrate on housekeeping. A young Gurung woman expressed her dreams as following:

> *"Since the day of my marriage I have been longing for the day when I do not have to go to the field any more."*

Though she said it with a laugh, the statement alluded to the destiny of most migrants' women in Kalabang. A 40-year old Gurung woman

said she wished she had the money to employ more people than she actually did. Her husband even encouraged her to do so in order to ease her workload. Yet, she preferred to save money for other uses than employing people. However, even this woman had to hire people for certain tasks, as she admitted:

> *"I have to do the household work. I have the work in the field. And if I have heavy work to be done I have to employ other people."*

According to her statement she had no problems looking after the household and the fields – apart from certain tasks, the "heavy works". Ploughing, carrying paddy home, threshing and maintaining the terraces are considered *"heavy works"*. She could not perform these heavy tasks herself for being a woman. Women are considered physically weaker than men (see also chap. 5.2.1). Instead of both risking people's gossip and struggling to manage the work, women prefer to engage men to have these works done. As employment is always required, this social norm is an advantage for non-migrating men, giving them the opportunity to earn money. In this way a modest levelling of the advantages of foreign employment happens within the community. Furthermore, these social rules make sure that women's workload does not increase too much and therefore can also be viewed as an advantage for women.

However, out-migration for labour can also decrease a woman's agricultural workload. The remittances might be used to employ more people with the result that the wife herself has to work less in agriculture. A Gurung man aged 46, who had served for 24 years in the Indian army, stressed the advantage of his foreign employment:

> *"There is more money to employ other people to work in the fields. If there is no money, household members have to do it all by themselves. This takes much more time."*

Although, employing workers generally relieves a woman's workload, hiring people can be stressful. A 45-year old Gurung woman stated that she always worried if the employees did the work all right. On the contrary, when her husband was working in the fields, she could put her mind at rest. It might also happen that a woman faces concrete problems when hiring people. A 48-year old Dalit woman related that workers she had engaged to work in her fields had not shown up. She ascribed the breach of agreement to her gender. She thought that if her husband had hired the workers, they would have met the obligation. The problem of people that commit themselves to work and then breach the commitment is one of respect, social hierarchies and confidence. For women, not having the backing of the household head might result in a loss of respect. A woman – moreover a Dalit woman – is not in the position to demand the adherence to the agreement. Hence, employing people might be linked to trouble and humiliation and can complicate a woman's everyday business.

To employ people is also considered a disadvantage of out-migration for labour for another reason: To employ people, money is needed – money that otherwise could be saved or used for other purposes, e.g. the education of children. Sometimes, the financial means to hire labourers even is not available, as the husband does not send remittances. Even if a husband is working abroad this is no guarantee that remittances will arrive regularly. Therefore, some migrants' women instead of engaging villagers on a daily wage basis prefer to apply the *nogar*-system (see chap. 5.1.3). However, this entails an increase of workload again for them. Another strategy is giving land on lease in order to bypass the need to employ people. This strategy can only be applied when half of the harvest still is sufficient to nourish all household members.

Another strategy to bypass or limit the need to engage people is to profit from home-leaves. A Dalit woman aged 48 elucidated that when her husband came for home-leave he was doing

> *"all the agricultural work that is done by men, such as threshing and the maintenance of the terraces".*

With this statement, she referred to the importance of home-leave intervals and the *point of time* of their return. If husbands manage to come for home-leave during harvest and plantation time, the necessity to employ men e.g. for the ploughing can be omitted and in this way money can be saved for other purposes. Yet, many migrants cannot return every year. Furthermore, there are *"heavy tasks"* to be done throughout the year.

Another reason why women might not be disburdened noticeably is the *point in time* of home-leave. As spouses often come on home-leave during the most labour intensive agriculture seasons, the workload might not decrease because this is the most labour intensive season. In this way, the workload does not decrease compared to the workload during the whole year, but it would be significantly higher during this season if spouses were not around.

When migrants return from abroad, women have to spend less time or even no time at all on subsistence agriculture. However, some wives do not reduce their working time in the field but instead work additionally in others' fields on a daily wage basis to earn as much money as they can.

Not only migrants' wives but almost all available adults work in agriculture. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that women bear the bulk of workload. On national level, it is estimated that over 96% of women shoulder at least 50% of agricultural production (Joekes 1991; Joshi 1985; Acharya & Bennett 1981:43). Moreover, it is striking that interviewed wives characterised activities of their counterparts as *"help"* (*"he helps in the field"*, etc.). The word *"help"* indicates that men support their partners by contributing their labour force. Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, the bulk of work stays with the wives even when their husbands are on home-leave or have returned. Thus, farming is a primary female competence.

Usually, a migrant's wife hopes for a "better life" where she has to work less, as the statement initially cited shows. For a woman, not to be bound to work in the fields is a sign of the household's wealth. A non-migrant's wife accepts her situation, she does not hope for any changes. A migrant's wife, in contrast, expects an improvement. After all, improvement of the situation had been the very reason to choose out-migration for labour as a livelihood strategy.

On the one hand people send one work force abroad to earn money. On the other they need money to compensate the lost work force. Only in some cases, employing more people than just the one necessary to replace the husband could decrease the overall workload. Thus, referring to the workload, out-migration for labour is not a clear-cut advantage. Whether migration diminishes women's workload depends on the financial (to hire workers) and natural resources (quantity of land property) as well as on the wife's position within the household (whether she lives in a nuclear or extended household).

5.2.4. Wage employment

In Kalabang, as in the whole country, earning cash income is basically a man's duty. Only in agricultural wage employment women and men are equally engaged. However, occupations others than agriculture are mainly occupied by men. This is consistent with the national level where less than 10% of women are engaged in non-agricultural employment (CBS 1995:211, in Molesworth 2001:54).

Besides agriculture, only a few women earn a salary. Some are self-employed, selling e.g. milk, *ghiu* (butter), fuel wood, *kodo* (millet) or *makai* (maize). A few women are employed by NGO's in the village as cleaner, teacher or health care facilitator (see Tab. 12). For some women, earning a salary is the only way to make a living, as they cannot count on a husband to support them. For other women, working for an NGO is an alternative to agricultural work. However,

the number of women being employed beyond agriculture is small.

Men on the contrary are often engaged in wage employment both in agriculture and in other sectors (see Tab. 12). Most men combine temporary employment in agriculture and construction work. A man working in road construction earns 150 *rupees* per day. Hence, he earns more than with agriculture (100 *rupees*). Others are self-employed or have a permanent job in the town of Pokhara. In the village, there are few possibilities for permanent employment. In Kalabang, a training centre of a Japanese NGO on the hilltop provides most of the permanent jobs. The NGO employs guards, gardeners, cooks and cleaners, 17 people altogether.

Tab. 12: Wage employment according to *Jat*

Jat	**Employment men**		**Employment women**
	Before migration	**After migration**	
Gurung	• Agriculture • Head-cook for an NGO • Priest • Office job (state)	• Agriculture • Own business • Guard for an NGO • Bus driver in Pokhara • Health post	• Agriculture • Health care facilitator of an NGO
Dalit	• Agriculture • Construction work • Blacksmith	• Agriculture • Own business • Guard for an NGO • Construction work	• Agriculture
Brahmin	• Construction work • Priest • Working for an NGO • Own business	• Own business	• Own business • Cleaner for an NGO • Teacher for an NGO

Special interest should be given to the category own business, which means being self-employed. Self-employment in Kalabang includes activities such as running a shop or a mill, having a small taxi company or selling agricultural products. Informants relate that the establishment of businesses such as a shop or a taxi company was possible due to the savings during their foreign employment. Out-migration for labour, hence, improved the livelihoods of these returnees. Looking at

permanent employment it might be concluded that migration in fact facilitates new opportunities: Eminent more returnees occupy a permanent job than future migrants. Whereas men stated that they even did not look for a job before they left the village[50], they obviously have actively searched for a job and substantially more often succeeded. It can be assumed that future migrants do not look for a job in the nearer surrounding because they have the option to migrate and prefer this strategy. Another reason might be that household members are used to have an additional income source. The wife might push her returned husband to look for an employment to ensure the needed and accustomed cash income. Moreover, wives get used to manage the bulk of housekeeping, childcare and agriculture alone. The pressure to repay debts can be another motivation to seek cash income. In some cases, loans were precisely taken to facilitate migration but could not been paid back.

5.2.5. Conclusions: Migrating men – working women

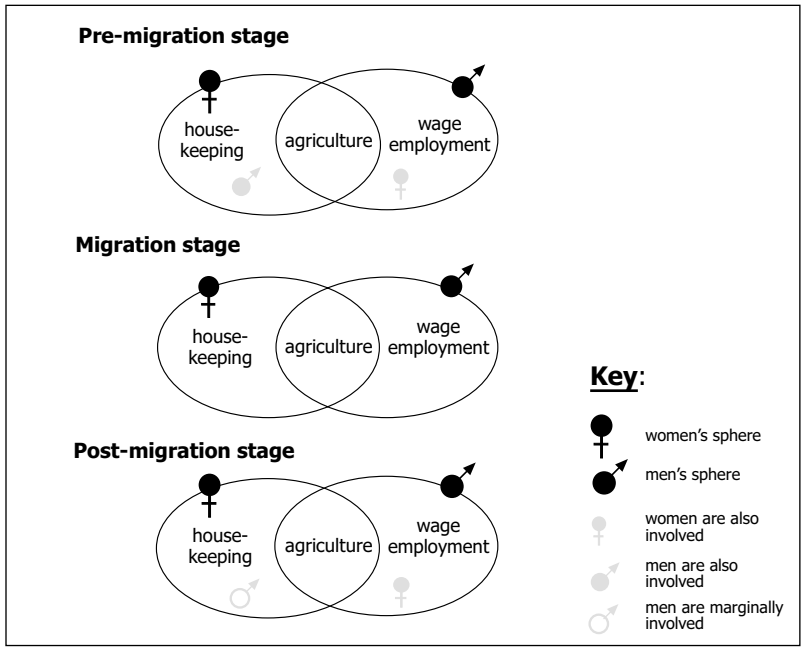
This chapter draws together the processes described above and concludes that out-migration for labour evokes changes in the gendered labour division in Kalabang. Yet, changes are only temporary. They do not persist after the return of husbands from abroad. Furthermore, changes are limited to the characteristic of the labour division but do not result in basic changes.

The previous chapters elaborated two gender specific spheres of competencies (see Fig. 5): housekeeping is a female and wage employment is a male sphere. To agriculture, women and men contribute equal portions, yet gender divisions exist regarding specific agricultural tasks. There are two exceptions to the model:

- In the agricultural sector women also earn a salary.
- When present, husbands occasionally lend a helping hand in housekeeping.

[50] The findings are concordant with the results of Wyss (2004:99).

Fig. 5: Gender specific spheres of competence throughout the three stages of migration



The model of the gendered labour division displayed in Fig. 5 maintains its validity during out-migration for labour, although the labour division undergoes several changes during this phase. E.g., in nuclear households the farm management largely lies in women's hands during migration. Nevertheless, men play an important role in agriculture by performing "men's tasks" during their home-leaves. In extended households on the contrary, the gendered labour division remains unchanged. Tab. 13 presents an overview over the changes of workloads throughout all three stages of migration.

Tab. 13: Gendered labour division throughout migration stages

Female's fields of activity hardly undergo any changes, whereas a man's lines of action change considerably with migration. A man gives up agriculture and occasional employment in the village and exchanges it for a permanent employment in a foreign country. A woman in contrast, looks after the children, the household and the fields throughout all three stages of migration. Yet, there are other factors that influence which tasks a woman performs. They are listed as the following:

- Age and number of children
- Age and availability of in-laws
- Financial resources (to hire people)

Even if the type of action does not change for a migrant's wife, the intensity of labour clearly does. At the best, a woman does not have to work in the fields because with the remittances her husband sends her she can hire labourers to do the job. Yet, it is more probable that her husband does not send enough remittances. In this case, she has to shoulder most of his duties additionally to the usual workload. As some tasks have to be done by a man, a migrant's wife always has to employ at least one man. When she is not able to pay, she will have to give her labour force instead. Yet, as a female labour force counts less than a male, she does have to work more hours than her husband would have. In this way, she has to over-substitute her husband. Three strategies were basically applied to replace men's labour force:

- Appropriate time point for home-leaves (the surplus is taken on by the wife)
- Employing people
- Giving land on lease

The interviews showed a clear-cut labour division concerning men's tasks. There are hardly any women found in monetary income generating activities apart from agriculture. Women's core competence is housekeeping. Surprisingly, a maceration of the model can be noticed at this point: Men are supporting their wives in housekeeping. They do the laundry, cook and clean *"sometimes"*. It can be assumed

that men particularly help their wives in times of little agricultural duties and when they do not have a wage employment. Being unemployed, they have free resources to support their wives. Furthermore, when men are not meeting their duty as breadwinners, they instead contribute to the reproduction activities by lending the wife a helping hand. Labour division turns out stricter during migration for two reasons:

- Men cannot support women in the day-to-day management of the household.
- A woman might give up work on a daily wage basis in agriculture, as her income can be replaced with the remittances and/or because she has more work on her own fields to look after.

The first reason is only valid when husbands are absent. During home-leaves migrants try to compensate their absence by supporting their wives more than in any other stages of migration. Correspondingly, wives experienced home-leaves generally as a great alleviation. In this way, the gendered labour division becomes blurred during the stage of home-leaves. Agriculture as a mixed sphere does not undergo any basic changes during migration. Most wives take on tasks from their husbands. Yet, agriculture does not turn into a pure female sphere, as there are important tasks such as ploughing and terrace maintenance – that remain men's works. When a couple has small children and no relatives to take care of them while the wife is working in the fields, it can also happen that a woman has to give up agriculture temporarily in order to look after the children. Whereas hiring people to work in the fields is normal, engaging people to support the wife in household cores or childcare is socially not acceptable and not practised. This indicates to the core activity of a wife. When husbands return for permanent stay, wives notice less support in housekeeping. This is mainly due to husbands' augmented involvement in wage employment. A husband therefore might have less time to support his spouse or does not feel committed as he meets his duty as a breadwinner. It also should be mentioned that the quantity of husband's work varies much. There are men who do a lot in housekeeping

besides their wage employment, whereas there are others who are not committed to household chores, or to remunerate labour. However, most women stated that they felt relieved since their husbands have returned.

Overall, it can be concluded that out-migration for labour leads to a temporary more consistent disunion of the female and male spheres during husbands' migration. Anyhow, the division is partly annulled again when migrants return. Nevertheless, compared to the situation at pre-migration stage, gendered labour division is more apparent after the return.

Finally, an increased workload not only means more work, it is usually linked with more responsibility. A migrant's wife, a Dalit woman aged 48, whose husband has been working in India since last 25 years, leaves no doubt about her function within the household:

> *"I am the head of the household now and have to look after everything."*

Hence, with the workload that the woman has taken on from her husband, she appears also to have taken on the responsibility and decision-making power. Whether taking on decision-making power really corresponds to workload will be analysed in the following chapter.

5.3. Women's and men's participation in decision-making

As indicated at the end of the previous chapter, this chapter analyses whether women's increased workloads correspond with an increase in decision-making participation during and after migration. Therefore, the gendered participation in decision-making both at household and community level is scrutinised. It is hypothesised that a wife's participation in decision-making at both levels augments when her husband migrates. As interviewees perceive migration as a temporary phase in a husband's life cycle, it is assumed that the husband takes on his previous position within the household when he returns from

abroad. Women in this way would on the one hand experience a phase of temporary autonomy during migration and on the other keep the men's role free without contesting it.

To analyse gendered participation in decision-making, various fields of decision-making both at household (chap. 5.3.2) and at community level (chap. 5.3.3) are distinguished. A comparison of different stages of migration shows clear shifts in gendered decision-making competence. However, before coming to the detailed discussion of changes in decision-making, chap. 5.3.1 provides basic cognitions on the issue of decision-making processes in Kalabang. Insights are summarised in chap. 5.3.4.

On household level, the following fields are inquired: main decision-maker (household head), management of money, marriage and education of children and health care (see Tab. 14). These issues largely correspond with Pkhakadze's (2002:43-46)[51] and are specified below. To analyse decision-making at community level, presence and active participation at community meetings is inspected.

Tab. 14: Matrix of research categories

		MIGRATION STAGE		
		Pre-migration	**Migration**	**Post-migration**
HOUSEHOLD LEVEL	Household head			
	Management of money			
	Arrangement of children's marriage			
	Children's education			
	Health care			
COMMU-NITY LEVEL	Presence at community meetings			
	Active participation at meetings			

[51] The author analyses women's participation in decision-making processes in the following fields: daily income management, family planning, education, decision to migrate and decision to seek medical help in case of sickness. I added the issue agriculture, arranging children's marriage and education of children.

- **Household head**: Who takes decisions within the household generally? Who is the household head?
- **Money management**: Who holds the purse? Who decides what to purchase?
- **Migration**: Who took the decision to migrate? (pre-migration stage, only)
- **Arrangement of children's marriage**: Who chooses a bride or a groom for the children?
- **Children's education**: Who decides about the education the children get? Who decides when to enrol children?
- **Health care**: Who decides about medical treatment of household members?
- **Presence at community meetings**: Who attends community meetings and with which frequency?
- **Active participation at community meetings**: Who contributes to discussions at community meetings?

5.3.1. Preliminary findings

Before going into details of decision-making dynamics in Kalabang, some results of general character are presented. They are commented in advance because they help to understand subsequent findings.

Communication between spouses during migration. When a husband migrates to a foreign country for employment, this does not mean that communication between spouses breaks. All informants reported to regularly write letters, some even made telephone calls from time to time. However, these communication procedures are either time consuming or complicated and costly. Hence, writing letters might be an adequate instrument to obtain advice or instructions if time is not pressing. Furthermore, illiterate persons depend on the help of a literate person to read and write on their behalf. This hinders the communication on personal issues. Therefore, for urgent cases and personal issues one might be better served by phone call. Phone calls are made from the city in order to keep intimacy. Calling from the village means the risk of neighbours listening to the conversation.

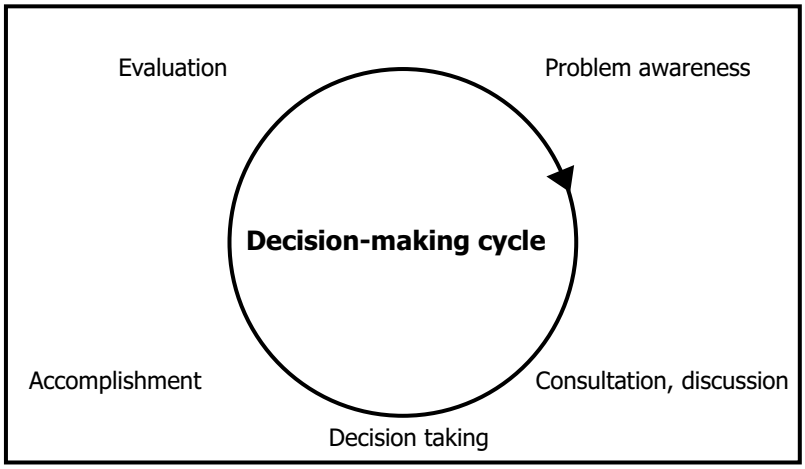
Hence, a woman is not totally left on her own resources but still finds herself in quite a different situation than before out-migration for labour, when her husband could be asked whenever needed. On the other hand, a man is not totally cut off from his family's activities but still misses the bulk of everyday life and most decisions. What communication means to a home-stayer shall be illustrated with the following quotation of a young Gurung woman, whose husband had been working in Malaysia since last five months:

> *"When I come to know that my husband is going to call me in the evening, I am nervous from the morning. I have to think how I will address him and what I am going to tell him. I am afraid that I will not be able to speak properly with him the things I want to tell him. And I will tell him the things that I should not tell him."*

The woman had a telephone in the house and she got a phone call from her husband every week, which is very often compared to others. The quotation shows that although she often talks with her husband, there are many things she wants to tell him. However, there is also information she wants to conceal, probably because she does not want to bother him.

Phases of decision-making. Wilk (1989:30) points out that people involved in a decision-making process occupy different roles in different phases of the process. These roles again, are "firmly entrenched in wider cultural and social concepts like gender and age" (Wilk 1989:30). E.g., a wife might address the need for a sick household member to see a doctor in front of her husband. The husband consults with his parents, concludes that, in fact, a doctor is needed and finally takes the patient to the hospital. In order to keep the study straightforward, the research concentrated on the phases of "decision taking" and "consultation, discussion".

Fig. 6: Phases of the decision-making process



Relevance of decisions. The analysis showed that irrespective of the fields of decision-making, decisions could largely be classified into two types according to their relevance for the actors, i.e. the direct and indirect impacts on them (see Tab. 15). Many of the operational decisions are actually not even perceived as decisions, as the decision taken often appears as the only logical one. E.g. when a woman uses the oil up, she will in the same afternoon buy new oil in the village shop because to cook dinner, she will need it. Theoretically, she could also decide not to buy oil and manage without instead. Yet, it is a common consensus that meals should be cooked with oil. Therefore, the decision appears so "natural" to all household members that they even do not perceive it as a decision. Strategic decisions differ fundamentally from operational decisions. A strategic decision often takes much more time to make. As strategic decisions usually are trend-setting for one or several persons' future they are carefully balanced, as much information as possible is gathered, appreciated persons are asked for their advice, consent is obtained, etc. Strategic decisions are furthermore characterised by their options. Often, but not necessarily, much more alternatives than taking an operational decision are at disposal and have to be considered.

Tab. 15: Relevance of decisions

	Operational decisions	**Strategic decisions**
Characteristics	• Day-to-day business • Routine process • Intuitive	• Long term • High impact • Complex decision making process
Example	Decision to buy oil	Choosing a groom for a daughter

5.3.2. Decision-making on household level

This chapter elucidates the division of decision-making power between wives and husbands. The role of other household members, namely father- and mother-in-law is also considered, where relevant. The chapter starts with an outline of the general characteristics of intra-household decision-making. Further on, these general results are specified in certain decision-making fields, namely management of money, health care and children's education and arrangement of children's marriage. At the end of the chapter, a summary and discussion of the results are given. The general findings presented just below and results referring to money decisions are based on semi-structured interviews, findings on marriage, education and health care are based on semi-structured tables.

It is important that husband and wife understand each other-

intra-household decision-making dynamics

In the majority of the households in Kalabang, husbands are the household heads of nuclear households and fathers-in-law of extended households. Yet, most men do not rule and decide solely and in an absolute manner but include other household members – especially wives – in decision-making. Indeed, female and male informants often described the decision-making process within the household as following:

"Husband and wife usually come to a conclusion."

Often, a decision is made after a discussion between the husband and the wife and sometimes with other household and/or family members, particularly with in-laws. So-called household problems

are seldom discussed with people who do not belong to the household or to the closer family – *"villagers do not interfere in these affairs"*. Only when help can be expected – such as a loan – problems are discussed with villagers.

Even though women and men stated that they usually *"come to a conclusion"*, spouses do not always agree. It is probable that either the wife or the husband prevails. Terms like *"coming to a conclusion"* or *"reaching a consensus"* are often automatically associated with equity. In fact, these terms do not give information about the extent of participation in decision-making of different household members. Rightly, a consensus is based on the agreement – at least tacit – of all the participants. However, this does not imply that power relations do not exist. A person might also agree because she or he does not dare to oppose. We know that husbands do confer with their wives. Nevertheless, we do not know how much female positions are weighted. Furthermore, whether the wife took the final decision or the husband is often irreproducible, even for involved parties. This renders the issue difficult to research. Furthermore, strategic decisions, such as the arrangement of children's marriage, are often also influenced by other household and family members. Finally, there might be as many nuances of sharing decision-making power as there are couples in Kalabang.

The above is a typical situation in nuclear households. For wives living in extended households the situation is very distinct. In extended households, decisions are usually taken by parents-in-law or by the husband and his parents. Usually, before deciding the husband consults with his wife and integrates her opinion in discussions with his parents. In this way, a husband intercedes with his parents on behalf of his wife. To what extent a wife's opinion is acknowledged by her husband varies clearly between the couples. However, when a wife and a husband disagree, it is questionable that he defends her position (against his own) in discussions with his parents. In this way, a daughter-in-law living in extended household highly depends on her husband to place her interests and needs.

Formal and de facto household heads. Under exceptional family situations, the household head can also be someone other than the husband or father-in-law. A woman might become household head after her husband dies and her children have all moved away or has no sons. In nuclear households, there are few couples that share household head responsibilities.

When husbands migrate, they remain formal household heads even though they live far away from their homes. Despite this, routine day-to-day decisions, i.e. operational decisions, are handed out to other household members, namely wives (in nuclear households). Wives then, manage household and fieldwork and insofar become *de facto* household heads. A 48-year old Dalit woman, whose husband has been working in India for 25 years, described her position within the household during migration as following:

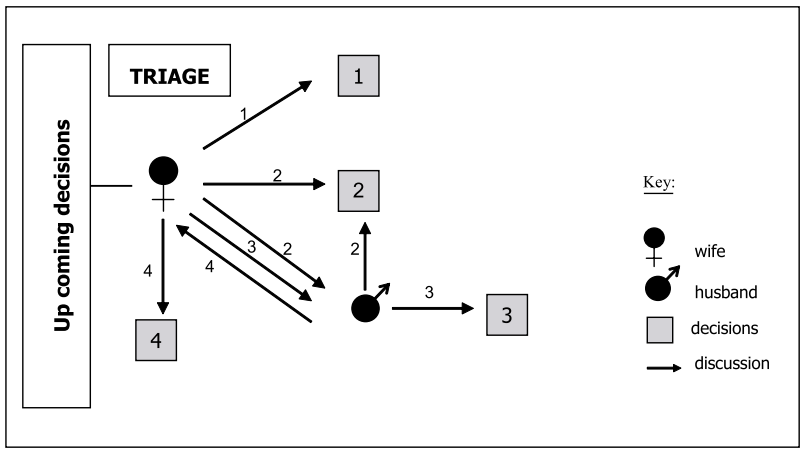
> *"I am the head of the household now [since her husband has emigrated] and have to look after everything."*

Though the statement is typical as it highlights women's augmented autonomy in decision-making after husbands' departure, it is atypical because the woman calls herself household head. The majority of interviewed women did not call themselves household head although they took all operational decisions.

Strategic decisions, on the contrary, are not taken without the formal household head. Thus, husbands participate in decision-making or even take these decisions during migration, too – or the decision is postponed. However, whether a decision is a strategic or an operational one is not always self-evident. At this point, wives play an important role. As they remain with the children, the household and the fields, they usually are the first to know about a problem. After getting aware of the problem, women have to decide if a decision required their husbands' or anyone else's consultation. This "triage of decisions" must be made by the home-staying wives (see Fig. 7). In a more general way, wives occupy a gatekeeper function not only by deciding for which decisions they need to consult with husbands but also by

selecting and pre-interpreting information about events at home and passing the respective information to their husbands.

Fig. 7: Triage of decisions during migration



1: wife decides alone; 2: wife consults with husband and they both decide together; 3: wife informs her husband and he decides alone; 4: wife asks her husband for advice, he expresses his opinion and the wife takes the final decision. Naturally, further alternatives are possible. E.g., the wife informs her husband, he talks with his father and then husband and father-in-law decide together. Possibilities are manifold.

Whereas for women living in nuclear households out-migration for labour generally comes along with an increased participation in decision-making, for wives living in extended households the husbands' departure signifies a decrease in their participation. The situation of an 18-year young Gurung woman who was living with her in-laws while her husband was working in Dubai might serve as an illustration. Since her husband had left the village, she has not been included in decision-making any more. Before, her father-in-law used to consult with her husband and he consulted with her. Hence, with her husband – the interface who used to transfer her interests and attitudes – her needs were not noticed any more. Furthermore, in front of her husband, a wife is more likely to express her doubts and to put her view forward than facing her in-laws. This procedure is new for the wife and requires more diplomacy in order not to harm someone's

honour. Yet, there are women who reported giving their opinion anyway. Normally, the older a woman gets, the more self-esteem and legitimisation (when she has given life to offspring) she has, to defend her interests and bring in her view.

Indeed, the roles of wives and husbands can also invert during migration. When a wife has a largely established position within the household, she talks on behalf of her husband and brings in his opinion in discussions. The responsibility not only to act on behalf of herself but also on behalf of her husband increases a wife's scope in intra-household decision-making. However, this does not automatically result in more participation from the wife's side. It might be that she cannot bring in her view, although she represents the couple's position. She might just follow her husband's opinion. Furthermore, it is also possible that the husband has direct contact with his parents and they discuss and decide together, excluding the wife from decision-making. However, when a husband's contact to his family predominantly is maintained through his wife, as often is the case, migration renders a husband more dependent on his wife. Hence, how much a woman in an extended household participates in decision-making during migration is influenced by her position within the household and the relationship between her husband and his parents.

Even when a wife's participation in intra-household decision-making increases and she represents her husband's positions in discussions, a wife also needs her husband's backing. By writing letters or making telephone calls, women want to find out what their partners think about an issue or what possibilities they have to intervene when they are not satisfied with a decision their in-laws have taken or are about to take. As the parents-in-law are the husband's parents, he knows them best and can suggest how to react. On the other side, a wife wants to inform her husband about decisions she has made together with in-laws. To inform her husband while he is abroad – and not only when he comes back on home-leaves – means to give the husband the chance to intervene. This means on one hand to legitimise decisions by obtaining the formal household head's affirmation. On

the other hand informing the husband about decisions means to ensure his role as household head by giving him the chance to express his disagreement and take another decision. Hence, wives compete on two fronts: They have to justify their own and joint decisions (taken together with in-laws) towards their husbands and they have to justify their own and joint positions (taken with her husband) towards their in-laws.

When husbands return from foreign employment, division of decision-making power changes again, competencies have to be re-bargained and all household members have to re-adapt to the new situation where a household member has come back and reclaims an active position in everyday life. Generally, husbands resume household head function again (formal and de facto). Among Dalits and Brahmins, women hardly are household heads. In Gurung households on the contrary a greater variance of arrangements can be observed. It can be the wife, the husband or both of them sharing decision-making power. Nevertheless, in most households, still husbands mainly decided. However, there were also households that remained de facto headed by women after the husbands' return. Most of the households headed by women were such where husbands were not present most of the time, be it because they worked in the city or because they lived with a second wife in another house. A 45-year old Gurung woman, for instance, used to discuss issues with her husband and took the final decision. Her husband used to accept her choices. He foremost lived in Pokhara and only returned on the weekends.

Even though husbands take on de facto household head function again, it can be suggested that wives participate more in decision-making after migration than they did during pre-migration. By managing the household and the farm, wives obtained self-confidence and knowledge. Hence, it is unlikely that they would not bring in their experience and knowledge and in this way influence decisions. Miller (1990:153) describes the gendered participation in decision-making of a couple in a village in Palpa District. The husband, who had spent 17 years in Bombay, "relies much on her [his wife's]

experience, while keeping the final decisions in his own hands". Women might influence decision-making in a subtle way that is not easily noticed from an outside perspective.

It is surprising that women in nuclear households who experienced an increase of their decision-making power within the household during migration appear to be easily ready to surrender their new competencies to their returned husbands again. It can be assumed that this is part of the arrangement the spouses have. A husband goes to live in a foreign country far away from his family to work in order to support his household. A wife in the meanwhile manages the farm and the household and looks after the children. Although a woman takes on tasks from her husband, she does not challenge his position within the household. A husband's position is guarded. In this way, it is signalled that out-migration for labour is only of a temporary phase and does not affect gender relations. If a husband's position would be questioned openly by his absence, he probably would be little keen to emigrate. The following statement of a 29-year old Dalit woman supports this hypothesis. The woman has not heard from her husband since he had gone to India, five years ago. She is one of the few women who call themselves household head.

> *"I like to be the household head. I can look after the household by myself; I am freer now, since my husband has gone abroad. I like to take my decisions on my own. When my husband still was in the village I did not think about that. Anyhow, I would like my husband to be with me again. If he were here, he would take the decisions. It would be ok for me, too."*

Although the quoted Dalit woman acted as a household head, she clearly knew who should be the household head and thus was ready to cede household head function again if her husband returned. Kabeer's study (1997) of income earning women in Bangladesh gives insight in these complex processes of challenging and perpetuating social norms. Kabeer discovered that women, whose preferences conflicted with those of men, resorted secrecy and deception (Kabeer

1997:291-192). Women met their interests but did it secretly in order not to challenge male authority. Alike, the above quoted woman ensured social norm by saving household head function for her disappeared husband. She may enjoy full autonomy as long as the special circumstances allow it – but no longer. Autonomy is not saved to "normal situation" because there would not be any excuse why she, not he, was the household head. With her promise to give up household head function, she preserves social norms. Consequently, women act as reproducers of social norms – even if these norms are curtailing their own autonomy.

Contrasting with my expectations, most women who disposed of more decision-making power during migration were not happy about it. They experienced the augmented autonomy as a burden. Women felt to be left to their own resources. Therefore, living in a extended household was perceived as an advantage during migration. The following statement of a 24-year old Gurung woman represents a common attitude:

> *"It is better to live in extended household because it helps in deciding. We can sit together and discuss."*

The statement clearly shows the ambiguity of decision-making power. An increased participation in decision-making means more scope and more autonomy – but also more responsibility. Hence, only few women reported enjoying augmented decision-making power. The above quoted Dalit woman (29) was one of them. She evidentially enjoyed her expanded scope. She had no problems in taking all the responsibility. However, her situation is exceptional. It can be assumed that after five years she did not really expect her husband to show up again, although she did not express resignation. Hence, she had no option to give off responsibility and decision-making power to her husband again in the future. Nor did her husband return in regular intervals for home-leaves to ensure his position within the household. After a period of adaptation she might have realised that she *could* cope with the situation and that bearing responsibility alone also meant doing it her own way.

Special fields of intra-household decision making dynamics

In the previous subchapter it was shown that generally, a husband takes household decisions. When taking a second, more detailed, look at the issue of intra-household decision-making, it becomes evident that the situation is more complex. Therefore, in this subchapter, above described division of decision-making competencies between wives and husbands are specified in terms of scrutinising selected aspects of the day-to-day management of the household, namely management of money, arrangement of children's marriage, children's education and health care. The findings presented originate from semi-structured tables conducted with 15 women and 12 men and from a group discussion.

Management of money. There is a clear difference between the *jats* concerning decisions about money expenditure. All Brahmin, most Dalit and some Gurung men managed the household purse before they migrated. Gurungs often stated to decide about expenses both husband and wife together. Dalit women were in several cases involved in financial decision-making. Brahmin women, in contrast, never managed the household money. Although most respondents had no problem answering the question of who managed the household money, the case is not that clear as the following statement of a Gurung woman highlights:

> *"I have the purse. If we have money to manage, I am doing it. If we had more money, I would give it to my husband for saving. But as we have only little money, I keep it."*

Hence, women often hold the purse. Yet, there are two cutbacks:

1) First, there often is hardly any money to manage.
2) Second, as soon as there is any surplus money – i.e. money that is not needed immediately – it is no longer a wife's competence to manage it, but her husband's.

In extended households, parents-in-law usually decide about what to buy and how to manage the money. They might consult with the husband and the wife but a wife's participation is limited.

What happens with the share of money management competencies when husbands migrate? For women, who already managed the purse during pre-migration, nothing changed. They continued doing it. The only variation was that before migration, a wife could easily seek advice when she felt it difficult to take a decision. In nuclear households, where a husband used to decide about expenses, this competence is transferred to his wife after his departure. The wife decided autonomously about daily expenses. In few cases only, the husband managed the money from abroad. He used to send a message along with the remittances, which indicated how much money should be spent on what. For wives living in extended households, the situation during migration is completely different. Their participation in decision-making remains the same as during pre-migration. As in-laws are managing the household money, they also receive remittances. Sometimes, wives received an extra "pocket money" from their husbands. Yet, remittances often do not arrive regularly as this income is not predictable and wives cannot rely on it.

It was expected that after the husband's return, the husband would appropriate control over finances again as is the case with the household head function. Surprisingly, the interviews gave evidence that those wives who managed the money during migration usually continued doing so after husbands' return. Only in few cases, the husband took on the responsibility again. The following statement of an approximately 40-year old Gurung woman is typical:

> *"When my husband was abroad, I took all the decisions. It has not changed since he came back. He earns the money and I spend it."*

Hence, management of money shifts from a rather male dominated to a female dominated field during migration and (to a lower extent) subsequently. Yet, this is only valid for Gurungs and Dalits. In Brahmin households, money was always managed alike before migration. Thus, Brahmin women experience the most dramatic changes concerning their participation in financial decision-making during migration. An interesting point is that in households, where wives and husbands decided together about expenses, it was mostly wives who actually held the purse.

As shown above, men's absence results in an increased female autonomy. In Nepal's patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal society this is not a matter of course. It was expected that fathers-in-law (even if not living in the same household), brothers or other male kin-men fill in for the husband to manage the money. This is not even the case in Brahmin nuclear households. Women might be tolerated to manage the money because

- there is not much money to manage or because
- the management of money is not a clear-cut gendered task.

However, women's autonomy during migration must be put in proper perspectives. Autonomy was limited by the following factors:

- First, decision-making competence is limited to operational decisions. Strategic decisions are postponed to the husband's home-leave where a decision can be discussed or the husband just takes it.
- Second, remittances often do not exceed daily expenses and hardly any money can be saved. Scarcity of financial means limits discussions about its expenditure. Similarly, not much power is linked with the management of money. As soon as the amount of money raises and with it the importance and variability to what it could be spent on, men take on the management. If a woman plans extraordinary expenditures, which exceed the budget, she has to contact her husband and request extra remittances. Hence, it is the husband's decision to finally send

the money. Extra money cannot be spent without the permission of the husband unless the wife disposes of a budget that allows extraordinary expenses, which in fact is rare in Kalabang. Even after migration, most households do not dispose of much savings, if any at all.

The link between the amount of money at disposal and women's control over it is also stressed by Kantor's (2003:442-443) findings from India. In her study on the impact of women's wage employment on their control over money she concludes that a high level of control over income corresponds with a low level of income. With increasing income, women were more likely to lose control over it.

Third, as briefly mentioned above, a wife depends on the remittances of her husband. In many cases, the wife is more dependent on cash income during migration than before (see also chap. 5.2). Some wives use a part of the remittances to substitute husband's labour force. Usually, a wife's influence on the amount of money to be transferred is very limited. It is the husband who decides how much money to send and how much money to save abroad or to spend on his own. Most women had no idea about the salary of their husbands. Husbands did not inform and wives did not dare to ask.[52] As long as wives do not have any idea about the amount their husbands are earning, they cannot pose any demands on the amount to be remitted. In this way, the well-being of the household members lies to a great extent in the hands of the migrant. Thus, although a man had to hand over control and management of the household money to his wife, with the remittances, he keeps an important instrument to control household members.

[52] Women told me that they did not have an idea about the salaries of their husbands. Yet, it could also be possible that they knew it but did not want to share with me.

Arrangement of children's marriage, children's education and health care.

There is no gendered division of competence evident in terms of choosing a groom or bride for the children. Whereas some respondents stated that husbands decided whom their daughter or son should marry, others said that wives did so. A 59-year old Gurung woman related that she informed herself about possible brides in the village and chose a young woman. She did not confer with her husband or son but just informed them and they agreed. Though, most couples related to discuss the issue together and to find a consensus. Sometimes, children are included in discussions about their future groom or bride.

However, in nuclear households the decision about the future spouse for the children is never made without the (formal) household head, i.e. the husband. After all, the decision whom their daughter or son shall marry has dramatic impact on their child's future as well as on the family's reputation. The importance of the decision implies that the husband takes part in the decision-making process. Therefore, in migration stage, the decision whom a daughter or son shall marry is taken on the husband's home-leave. In this way, migration does not change a wife's participation in decision-making regarding marriage. However, regarding the *processes* of decision-making, changes can be detected. The duration of the decision-making process is limited to the length of the husband's home-leave. Thus, discussions and activities preliminary to the final decision – such as information gathering – are performed during a husband's absence, in order to keep decision-making on husband's home-leave short. After a husband's return, decision-making processes become less complicated again.

Even if a wife does not take a final decision about the future daughter- or son-in-law, with the collection of information on potential brides or grooms she has a noteworthy influence on the outcome of the decision-making process. The way she presents information about

people influence a husband's choice considerably. A wife pre-interprets and selects the information that she wishes to be at disposal for the discussion. In this way, women are responsible for the rather informal task of information collection, whereas men come into play as soon as it becomes formal by taking a final decision and starting marital negotiations. See also Pignède (1993:226-228) who found the same process for marital decision-making among Gurungs.

Hence, marriage decisions are performed according to a common procedure. This is not the case with decisions on the children's education. The analysis of semi-structured tables gives evidence that either the husband decides about children's education or both spouses decide it together. Contrasting to this, in a group discussion, women explained that wives decided when to enrol children. Participants of the group discussion elucidated their statement with the competence of a wife. Because the wife was looking after children, she knew the right time to send children to school. Out-migration for labour evoked no changes concerning educational decision-making. Again, important decisions were postponed to the husband's home-leave. The contradiction between the statements of individuals and the statements made in the group discussion concerning children's education is probably rooted in the question itself. Namely, people were asked who decided about children's education. Since this question does not specify whether it referred to the enrolling of children or to discussions concerning higher education, interviewees might have answered one of them. However, it can be assumed that wives decide about the enrolling, as they know the children best. About higher education, on the contrary, husbands are assumed to decide, as it is a decision of bigger scope, linked with long-term financial investments.

Contrariwise, in case of severe sickness, a decision cannot wait for the husband's home-leave. Yet, to take someone to hospital or to see a doctor is a decision, which might have dramatic effects and thus is an important one. On the one side, taking someone to the town is connected with effort both regarding financial and human resources. On the other, not giving a sick person the required treatment

means to jeopardise her or his life. Again, interviews revealed an ambivalent characteristic of health care decision-making. Whereas some interviewees responded that health care was a women's competence in round terms, others had difficulties answering the question. They could not define who was taking decisions concerning health care and instead replied that they had not had any case until now and therefore did not know who would decide if there was such a case. Female's competence for health care was justified with the same reason that was used referring to children's education: Women know the household members best. When respondents have difficulties naming the person deciding about an issue and explain that they could not say it because they never had such a decision within their household, it can be assumed that there are no social constraints and rules regarding gender specific competence. If a social norm in this regard existed, experience would not be necessary to answer the question. As women decide about medical treatment even when their husbands are present, it is not astonishing that there are no changes when husbands migrate. Health care remains a female competence throughout all three stages of migration.

However, when it comes to take a household member to the town's hospital, women experience difficulties when husbands are abroad. It was stressed in a group discussion that in such situations women missed their husbands badly. It would have been their task to bring the patient to the hospital.

Subsuming arrangement of children's marriage, children's education and health care together under "family matters", it can be stated that approximately a moiety of all interviewed couples share decision-making power in these issues. The interviewees who share decision-making power stated continuing doing so during migration, despite the hampered communication. It can be assumed that not all decisions are really made together but only important ones (strategic decisions). In the other moiety of interviewed persons, either the husband or the wife decides about "family matters". In cases where the husbands

decided before they went abroad, a clear shift occurred during migration. In this stage of migration, wives decided. When husbands returned, the situation was re-established at pre-migration stage.

Contrary to my expectation, fathers-in-law do not amplify their influence when husbands migrate. Their participation in decision-making remains the same both in joint as well as in nuclear households. On the basis of the patriarchal character of the Nepali society (see chap. 3.1), it could have been expected that other male relatives stand in for husbands. A husband in this way would manage and control household by proxy. In Africa i.e., this strategy was found by Nelson (1992:122-123). In Kalabang, this strategy was not applied. In nuclear households, wives replaced their husbands in almost all cases instead. In extended households, husband's tasks were usually somehow divided between father-in-law, mother-in-law and wife, depending on individual arrangements. According to Nelson (1992:126), whether a remaining wife can act autonomously or is controlled by kin-men depends on the strength of patrilineal, extended family or local lineage.

Factors that effect women's participation in decision-making

The list of factors which influence decision-making participation and changes that occur during migration can be specified and completed as following:

- *Women's position within the household* (if they were daughters-in-law or spouses of the household head) was found one of the most important factors. Whereas wives in nuclear households are bound to take on more responsibilities, wives living in extended households do not assume new responsibilities. Nevertheless, participation in decision-making of a wife in an extended household changes. When the husband migrates, the intercession between a wife and her in-laws disappears. As a consequence, the wife's decision-making power decreases. Only for elder women, who

generally are well established within the household, participation might increase because they represent their husbands and sons.

- The *field of the decision* itself determines about who is included to which extent in decision-making. Considerable changes only occur referring to de facto household head function and management of money. In both fields, women take on decision-making power from their husbands and partly save it to post-migration stage.
- The *relevance of decision* (operational or strategic decision) is also crucial for the gendered competence. During foreign employment, wives decide about operational decisions themselves, whereas strategic decisions are further on decided by both spouses or by the husband alone.
- Even acknowledging above factors, there is still a variance in decision-making participation of migrants' wives. These variations can be explained by the scope of action, which spouses avail to shape their personal relationship. Within a certain cultural and social frame, spouses develop their individual relationship. This will be named *"individual tacit arrangements"*.

In short, during migration shifts in decision-making competencies between the spouses occur particularly concerning operational decisions, in the fields of financial decisions and de facto household head function and among spouses with a rather egalitarian relationship.

5.3.3. Decision-making on community level

This chapter first highlights women's participation in community meetings indicated by their presence at meetings. The second part takes a closer look at women's participation by focusing on contributions to discussions at community meetings. In the last subchapter, the results are summarised and discussed. The findings are based on semi-structured interviews.

The most important institution of community politics in Kalabang is the *ward* meeting. *Ward* meetings are mass meetings where issues

of the village's development are discussed, individual disputes among villagers are arbitrated and allying rules (such as the daily wage for field workers) are defined. According to a village leader,

> *"Everything that is decided [on community level] is decided at ward meetings."*

The rule in Kalabang is that at a community meeting every household has to be represented by at least one person. Otherwise, a penalty is charged. If no household member is able to attend the meeting, a person can be engaged to represent the household. According to informants, approximately 50-60 persons attend a meeting. As there are approximately 230 households in Kalabang, it can be assumed that in fact one person represents several households at a time.

Participation in community meetings

Attending a ward meeting means on the one hand to receive first hand important information and on the other hand it means to represent the household. This task clearly is a male competence as interviews showed. With two exceptions only, all respondents stated that husbands or fathers-in-law usually attended ward meetings. Only when husbands are not available wives attend the meetings in the place of their husbands. The answer most frequently obtained from wives was as following:

> *"My husband attends the ward meetings. If he is not available, I will go."*

However, in some cases, sons or brothers attended meetings as well. Sometimes, a son joined his father and both of them went together.

There were only two out of all interviewed women, who regularly attended meetings and in this way were in charge to represent the household at meetings. Both of them were Gurung. One of these Gurung women lived alone, her husband had died and her children had moved away. Even though she was living in a "one-woman

household", it is not understood that she attended the meetings in person. Some of her sons lived in the nearby town. It would have been possible for them to come to the village for such a purpose. Indeed, a Brahmin woman called her brother from Pokhara to attend meetings instead of her. She was aged 40 and lived with her mother (app. 65 years old, her father had already died) and her son (10). She had left her husband because she was beaten. An elder Gurung woman related that in the past a woman could not represent the household. She narrated that in former times nobody attended meetings if there were no men available. In former times, a woman who attended community meetings would have provoked libel. This clearly had changed in Kalabang. There was no social threat or constraint towards women who occasionally or regularly attended meetings. The other Gurung woman, who used to represent the household, related that she already had attended meetings regularly before her husband had left the village for labour.

Whereas in nuclear households, wives occasionally attend meetings, daughters-in-law in extended households never do. In extended households, fathers-in-law go. If the father-in-law is not available the mother-in-law or the husband replaces him. A wife therefore has hardly any chance to go.

When women were asked why men usually attended community meetings, most interviewed women stressed that they themselves had no time because they had to cook. Furthermore, they thought that they did not understand discussions due to their poor education. According to them, it was more convenient to send their husbands, because they would understand the matters better. The given explanation for women's absence simultaneously is a reason for it. As women only rarely attend meetings, it is not considered important to choose a point in time to hold the meeting that is convenient for women, too. On the other hand, women do not ask for another date because they know that actually it is not their duty to attend meetings. As in Nepali culture, in Kalabang too, society is organised along the

private/public line and the genders are accredited to respective spheres. Women belong to the domestic, private sphere, men to the public. This is what people learn from their very childhood. As girls are never taken to community meetings but boys are, they both comprehend where their places are. In this way, time point of meetings is an illustrative example to show how structures influence action and vice versa as described by Giddens (1984). It furthermore explains why such patterns persist obstinately.

When husbands migrate, they are not able attend meetings any more. Therefore, wives replace their husbands during migration just like they used to do it at pre-migration stage from time to time. Nevertheless, representing the household remained a men's task. For most women, attending meetings was no pleasure and it can be assumed that unless it is the village rule, many women would not go. Nevertheless, most women stated that they appreciated the information that was passed on at the meetings.

After the husband's return from migration the initial gender division is re-established. In almost all nuclear households, husbands attended meetings again and were occasionally replaced by their wives. Yet, there is a remarkable change in the value. After the return of husbands more women occasionally attended meetings. Wives now occasionally represented households, who were exclusively represented by husbands during pre-migration. There were women who even went in turn with their husbands or who almost always attended the meetings. As shown in chapter 5.2.4, more returnees got engaged in the nearby town, resulting in continued absence. Their wives also attended meetings more frequently. Wives living in extended household, in contrast, continued to abstain from meetings during post-migration.

The expression *"attending meetings occasionally"* is not very precise about the absolute frequency with which women attend meetings. Whether a woman attends meetings frequently, seldom or never, depends both on external (time period and frequency her husband is absent) as well as on internal factors (individual tacit arrangement

between wife and husband). I.e. if a husband is very keen to attend the meetings himself, he might organise his home-leave when a meeting is hold. If he is not, the meeting date will not influence his choice for coming home. Hence, *"attending community meetings occasionally"* betoken very variable situations. Whereas some wives never attended meetings after their husbands' return, others actually always attend them. Most women lay something in between, having augmented their participation slightly compared during pre-migration. This might have the following three reasons:

1) According to the findings in chap 5.2.4, returnees are more likely to find a job in the village or the nearby town. Therefore, returnees are less present than they were before they had left (external factor).
2) During migration, wives and husbands both were compelled to experience the inverted gender division in competence. Wives got used to attend meetings, while husbands had learnt to trust in their wives' abilities.
3) Meetings are generally (not only by wives) experienced as a burden. Husbands are happy when their wives take on this duty from time to time.

Besides covering for his household in discussions, participants also obtain information concerning village politics and activities at community meetings. As these fields belong to the public sphere, recipients of new information are considered to be primarily men. Women, in contrast, usually only receive what their husbands pass on to them (unless they attend meetings themselves). Men pre-interpret and select information they pass their wives on (see also Göhlen 1998). When wives replace their husbands occasionally or regularly, women receive first hand information. As information is an important precondition for taking decisions, it can be presumed that receiving first hand information augments a woman's position in household decision-making. In this way, increased participation at community meetings has a spin-off on the household level.

Active contribution to meetings

Besides the dissemination of information, community meetings provide the opportunity to contribute to discussions and take influence on decisions on communal level. Surprisingly, women do not take this chance at all. Most women stated that they stayed silent during meetings, even if they did not agree with given statements. Poor education was often given as a reason for not raising the voice at meetings. People felt inferior due to their poor education. They thought they would not be able to follow the discussions and felt shy to express their positions, as they were not as eloquent as others. A Gurung woman, aged 41, whose husband served in the Indian army, gave another reason for not speaking up at community meetings:

> *"It is easier to speak up when there are only females. I feel easier, more relaxed. I feel more comfortable among women because they are all like me. I do not speak up in ward meetings because there are mostly men representing the household and I am only representing my husband. When there are males, I do not feel like speaking up because some of them are relatives of mine, like my grandfather, and it is a kind of respect not to speak up."*

She feels uncomfortable as a female among nothing but male participants. According to an informant, one third of participants were females – what I consider as a surprisingly high quota. Indeed, a respondent said that only female leaders took part at meetings, which would not exceed a modest number of women. As the above statement indicates, this later statement is more likely to meet reality.

But not only women remain silent during *ward* meetings, the bulk of Dalit and Brahmin men do not contribute to discussions either. Particularly Dalits often complained about discrimination at meetings. Besides education, power relations and dependence structures can be considered as important causes why people do not speak up.

A 45-year old Dalit man stated that he preferred not to argue too much with other villagers, as he had to live and work with the people in the village. Nevertheless, few women and some Dalit and Brahmin men dared to raise their voices. Yet, even they doubted that their views were considered when decisions were taken.

Contrary to Dalit and Brahmin men, Gurung men did not notice any discrimination during meetings. Moreover, some Gurung men stated that whenever they needed a discussion about an issue, a meeting was organised. Thus, Gurung men are in a position to considerably determine the agenda setting of community politics. Gurung women's responses were not consistent about the discrimination of people at meetings. Some stated that women were discriminated. Indeed, many Gurung women did not speak up at meetings, although they attended meetings more frequently than did Dalit and Brahmin women. Other Gurung women felt equal with men and thought that their view was valued as was their husbands'. A Gurung man brought out equal opportunity of women and men and simultaneously affirmed inequality with the following statement:

> *"Most of the men in Kalabang are ex-militaries, so they have learnt to give priority to women."*

The above statement indicates that allowing women to participate in communal decision-making is seen as a men's gentle gesture towards women, rather than a women's right.

Factors that hamper women's active participation in community decision-making

I conclude that although existent[53], only a few women (and no men) were aware of gender inequality. And when a woman said that women were discriminated, it often turned out that she actually meant that women were discriminated because of *jat* rather than because of gender. This clearly shows the interaction and interrelations of the

[53] According to my own appraisal.

categories *jat* and gender. Cameron (1998:45) emphasises in her study on low caste women in Far West Nepal the difficulty to separate the two concepts: "What can be said for gender is often true of caste as well; in practice, one often implicates the other." However, gender disparities are very subtle and therefore often not perceived. Furthermore, it can be "a serious error to take the absence of protests and questioning of inequality as evidence of the absence of that inequality (or of the nonviability of that question)" (Sen 1990:126). I explain the hardly existent awareness of gender inequality by dint of Sen (1990). Sen often observed that women could not give information about their personal welfare but always answered in terms of the welfare of their families. As intra-household divisions involve significant inequalities in endowments and entitlements of food, health care, labour etc., "the lack of perception of personal interest combined with a great concern for family welfare is, of course, just the kind of attitude that helps to sustain the traditional inequalities. There is much evidence in history that acute inequalities often survive precisely by making allies out of the deprived. The underdog comes to accept the legitimacy of the unequal order and becomes an implicit accomplice" (Sen 1990:126).

For the same reason, as women (and men) are not aware of gender inequalities, women do not claim an active role in communal decision-making. With Burchfield et al. (2002) we can approximate an explanation why women do not increase their contributions to community discussions in spite their increased attendance. According to the authors, Nepal's patriarchal structure assigns women to restricted roles within the household and limits their competencies to the family: "Nepali women have internalized their restricted responsibilities within a patriarchal system, making it difficult for them to envision themselves in roles outside the home" (Burchfield et al. 2002:99). Therefore, women occupy a subordinate position in public life. Beside this, there are other reasons why women refuse

to get actively involved in community politics. They are listed in the following:

1) Women attend meetings with a legitimisation that differs from men's. Women attend meetings as deputies of their husbands. They perceive themselves as representatives of the representative of the household – and not as direct deputies of the household (see statement of the 41-year old Gurung woman above). Insofar, it is not surprising that women rarely bring in their views and join discussions.

2) Women feel inferior to men. Women feel shy to express their thoughts because they are not used to speak to the mass. Often, this is linked with poor education. Women feel inhibitions to talk to many people. Due to their poor education and lack of practice they are not as eloquent as (Gurung) men and are not used to express standpoints. Furthermore, in the Nepali culture, women are meant to show respect to males and elders, especially when they are familiars (see statement of the 41-year old Gurung woman above). Opposing them is easily seen as impudence. Yet, when a demand is seen as impudence, the demand itself takes a back seat and the person who expressed the demand comes to the fore. The demand does not have to be taken seriously any more. This personalisation is an effective strategy to prevent people from expressing so-called impudent demands. In a village, where social relations are the keys to one's well being, one does not risk her or his fame frivolously.
3) Women feel uncomfortable among men. Women and men do interact with each other in the village, e.g. by working in the fields. Nevertheless, they do not interact in public beyond working purposes, i.e. women and men are not seen chatting with each other.
4) Women are not familiar with the form of community meetings because young women are not introduced to community meetings as are young men and therefore feel uncomfortable.

5.3.4. Conclusions: Shifting competencies?

The previous subchapters generally support the hypothesis that women's participation in decision-making on the household level increases during men's migration. At the community level, on the contrary, migration leads to no changes in women's effective participation in decision-making. Indeed, women attend meetings more frequently during and even after migration, but abstain from contributing to discussions. Tab. 16 provides an overview over decision-making competencies of wives and husbands in the respective fields of decisions throughout the three stages of migration. Changes are evident in the field household head, management of money and presence at community meetings. Women become *de facto* household heads meanwhile their husbands remain *formal* household heads. Women's increased participation concerning financial decisions and attendance of community meetings even persist after their husbands' return. In the field marriage, health care and active participation at community meetings, on the contrary, husbands' absence led to no changes in the division of competencies between wives and husbands.

Tab. 16: Gendered participation in decision-making

		STAGES OF MIGRATION			
		Pre-migration	**Migration**	**Home-leave**	**Post-migration**
HOUSEHOLD LEVEL	Household head	♂	♀ ♂	♂	♂
	Management of money	♀ ♂	♀	♀ ♂	♀ ♂
	Arrangement of children's marriage	&	–	&	&
	Children's education	♀ ♂	♀ ♂	♀ ♂	♀ ♂
	Health care	♀	♀	♀	♀
COMMUNITY LEVEL	Presence at meetings	♀ ♂	♀	♂	♀ ♂
	Active participation at meetings	♂	–	♂	♂

Key: ♂ husband decides; ♀ wife decides; ♀ wife is involved in decision making; & wife and husband decide together; ♀ ♂ wife or husband decides; – no decisions

Besides the gendered participation in decision-making in specific fields of decisions, a more basic gender division was detected: During migration, women take on responsibility for operational decisions whereas strategic decisions are further on made by both spouses jointly or by the husband alone. This division can mostly be ascribed on hampered communication: Only the most important decisions are discussed together, others are decided by the wife alone or by the wife and her parents-in-law or by in-laws only. However, whether a decision is a strategic or an operational one is not always that clear. To assign this decision is a competence of the home-stayer. Wives thus perform the triage-function linked with some responsibility and autonomy.

The results of the study in hand show that initially I had overrated the significance of certain decisions. Expenditures e.g. appear to a big extent to be pre-determined by scarcity. What the money should be spent on does not evoke many discussions. Bentley (1989:73) comes to a similar conclusion in his study on intra-household decision-making in rural Portugal. He appoints that household members "often reach a consensus easily, because frequently one choice is the only logical one". This also applies for most financial decisions in Kalabang.

It was shown that women's participation in decision-making during migration generally increases. Yet, this increased participation in decision-making has to be put in proper perspectives. Factors listed in set limits to women's participation during their husbands' absence.

Tab. 17: Curtails of women's increased participation in decision-making

Factors that curtail women's decision-making power	**Specification**
Household type factor	Only women living in nuclear households increase their participation in decision-making. In extended households, it is particularly fathers-in-law who decide (before and during migration). Husbands function as intercessor between wives and in-laws. Wives' participation in decision-making on household level can therefore even decrease during migration.
Level factor	Participation on community level only increases in terms of presence at ward meetings. Female participation in the means of taking active *influence* on communal decisions is hardly existent, irrespective of the migration stage.
Relevance of decision factor	Women only take on the responsibility for *operational decisions. Strategic decisions*, which are of bigger scope and importance, are jointly made by wives and husbands or even by husbands alone. Strategic decisions are either discussed through letters or on the telephone or postponed to husbands' home-leaves. Women occupy the important function to make the triage of the decisions: whether to consult their husbands underlies the wives' evaluation.
Duration factor	Women's participation only is increased as long as husbands are absent. When husbands return for home-leaves or when they return permanently, initial division of decision-making participation is applied again. The only exceptions are management of money and presence at community meetings.

At the community level, it was shown that even though women attend meetings clearly more frequently during and even after migration, women could not augment their active participation in communal decision-making. Returnees, in contrast, augment their influence at meetings on the basis of their reputation, which has improved due to out-migration for labour. It was emphasised by many interviewees that financial means bring a man respect in the village. At the household level, both husband and wife are met with more respect than before migration. A man accepted to live a long period of time far away from his family and is supposed to have worked hard. A woman shouldered increased workload at home and had to take on a burden of responsibilities, which she was not used to bear before. Several returnees and migrants expressed their admiration and sympathy for their wives as "they have to do everything alone. They have to work too much for the household". Contrasting to her husband, a wife's augmented esteem within the household is not transferred to more respect on the community level.

Finally – and this surely is also an important limitation – it is not evident whether the increased participation in decision-making during migration is an advantage for women. Whereas from an outsider's and feminist's perspective, this question would clearly be affirmed, women in Kalabang often expressed that they felt it difficult to cope with decision-making, being left to their own resources. Husbands' home-leaves or returns – and the coming along limitations of the wives' decision-making participation – for most women signified a relief. By appointing their experience of increased participation in decision-making as a burden, women highlight the ambivalent character of decision-making. The freedom to decide cannot be divided from its responsibility to decide rightly.

5.4. Discussion of the results: Gendered labour division and decision-making dynamics in Kalabang

This chapter puts the results presented above into a broader context and views the findings from another perspective. First, the central dimensions – labour division and participation in decision-making – are located within the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF). Second, a description of the intra-household asset endowments throughout the three stages of migration highlights the impacts of out-migration for labour on women and men beyond labour division and decision-making. Third, participation in decision-making is viewed from a bargaining perspective, using Sen's model of Cooperative Conflicts. A summary concludes the chapter.

5.4.1. Gendered labour division and participation in decision-making within the SLF

The main objective ("livelihood outcome") of out-migration for labour ("livelihood strategy") usually is a betterment of the household's financial resources to secure household members' survival or to alleviate one's living circumstances. However, migration has several "side effects". Three types of impacts of out-migration for labour can be distinguished:

1) Intended effects of migration

- Increased income (increased financial capital)
- Increased reputation (increased social capital)

2) Side effect I: known in advance and accepted

- Detachment of spouses over years
- Increased work burden for wives (lack of human power at home)
- Increased responsibilities for wives

3) Side effect II: not intended and not apprehended

- Changes in gender relations

The intended impacts are effects, which are aimed by the spouses. Side effects, in contrast, have to be accepted as they come along with the application of the strategy. Whereas some side effects are known in advance (side effects I) – e.g., spouses will not see each other over long periods – another effect remains largely unnoticed (side effect II): changes in gender relations. Despite its clandestine existence, this effect plays an important role in shaping home-stayers' and migrants' lives, as was shown in this study.

Returning back to gendered labour division and participation in decision-making, it can be stated that both are mainly determined by the gender culture and the gender order (see chap. 2.1.3) and thus located within the PIP-box. On the other side, they are also influenced by the asset endowments. Regarding labour division, it was shown that during migration:

- Increased financial resources lead to a decrease in women's workload because they can hire people to help them in agriculture.
- Women in extended households are less burdened because workload can be divided among more people. Hence a bigger human capital in the sense of the number of labour force relieves women.
- Huge land property might relief women as a part of it can be let on lease, and the output – together with remittances – still is sufficient.

Changes in the livelihood assets might lead to changes in a wife's workload or even in shifts in the gendered labour division. The livelihood assets are therefore further analysed in the following subchapter.

5.4.2. Gender specific livelihood assets

As shown in chap. 2.2, the display of gender specific livelihood assets reveals further valuable insights. As soon as effects of out-migration for labour on livelihood assets are presented for men and women

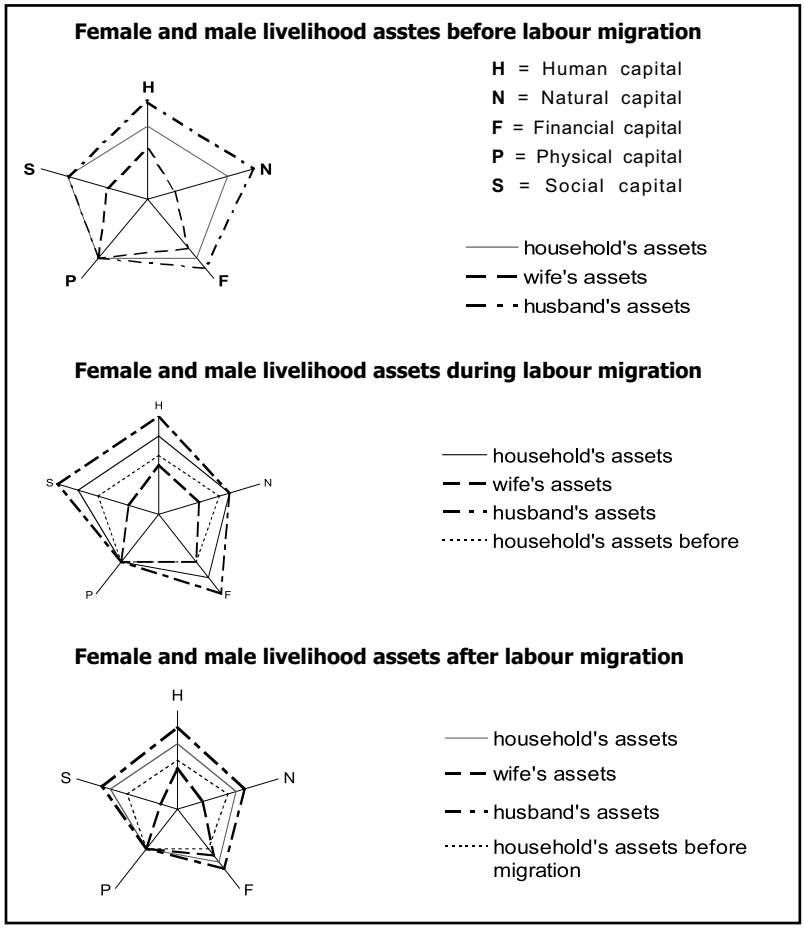
separately, it becomes obvious that women and men profit unequally from migration. Fig. 8 shows different asset endowments for the household in general and for the wife and husband of the same household throughout all three stages of migration. There are manifold possibilities to display household's assets at a starting point (i.e. before migration) because households in fact dispose of very different assets. As the interest of this study lies in the changes coming along with migration, it was assumed that the overall household's assets are of a medium quantity. Note that the graphs only show a tendency and are not based on quantitative data. There are no absolute values presented. The following comments specify the asset endowments during pre-migration as presented in Fig. 8:

- **Human capital**: Women endue less human capital because they generally are less educated and their life expectancy at birth is lower than men's (UNDP 2003:312). Furthermore, their workforce is valued less than those of men. This is manifest in the lower wages in agriculture.
- **Natural capital**: Women endue less natural capital. Women have access to land but they merely own it. The few women who owned land were widows or they had bought land from money they had inherited from their parents. The latter was only practised by women who were abandoned by their husbands or left their husbands because they were abused. Both cases are exceptional. In farm management, in contrast, women participate in decision-making.
- **Financial capital**: Women endue less financial means because men mostly decide about bigger expenses (i.e. strategic decisions). Yet, women do manage household money and take day-to-day (operational) decisions.
- **Physical capital**: On the basis of the data of this study accurate idea of the physical capital of women and men cannot be given. Besides, physical capital is composed of several indicators such as transportation facilities, water supply etc. which have very different effects on women and men. Therefore, the physical capital remains unchanged throughout all three migration stages.

- **Social capital**: Women dispose of less social capital because they often marry into a strange new family and village. On the community level, women are poorly represented.

The gender disparity in financial capital is lower than in natural capital because women not seldom earn an income and sometimes hold the purse but hardly are owners of land. Therefore, women generally have less control over the natural capital than over the financial capital.

Fig. 8: Gender specific livelihood assets and their changes throughout the three stages of migration



The asset pentagons displayed in 8 give evidence that women are discriminated in all assets pre-migration stage. During migration, gender disparities even augment. The natural and physical capital does not undergo any changes. Possibly, remittances allow to purchase more land or build a new house or to let land on lease. Yet, regarding financial, human and social capital, men profit more from migration than do women. Details about the gender specific asset endowments at migration stage are given below:

- **Human capital**: Working abroad, a man acquires skills. Thus, his human capital increases. Women managing the household and farm also acquire skills. But whereas men expand to new fields, women intensify labour in already familiar fields. Furthermore, skills in other fields than agriculture are esteemed higher.
- **Natural capital**: With the remittances from foreign employment, additional land property might be purchased. A wife's natural capital increases because she has taken on the full responsibility to manage and work her husband's fields. Simultaneously, her husband's natural capital decreases slightly as he loses control over the management during his absence.
- **Financial capital**: A migrant usually earns more than he did before he left the village (successful migration preconditioned) and hence, endues more money. At the same time, his wife has no control over his income at all, as she often is not informed about the amount of his salary. Without knowing how much her husband is earning, a wife cannot lay claim on the income. She has to be pleased with what he is sending her. Nevertheless, her financial capital increases as she alone decides about daily expenses. Additionally, if a wife's husband regularly sends remittances, a wife has more money at disposal. To conclude, it can be stated that financial capital increases for the whole household as well as for the husband and wife individually. Yet, gender disparity also increases.
- **Social capital**: Interviews gave evidence that a man's reputation is highly connected to his financial capital. Thus, migrants were more esteemed since they had a permanent employment. This clearly

indicates that a migrant's social capital augments. On the other side, a migrant can hardly maintain his social relations at home as he hardly is present. At this place his wife plays an important role: remaining in the village, she ensures that familial commitments are not neglected and social connections are cultivated. Only with his wife's support, a man can be sure to still have his basic social network when he returns after years. As migrants' wives are more dependent on support from neighbours and relatives, connections in the village are intensified on the basis of need for mutual help. As deputy of her husband and the whole household, she further attends community meetings – a task which a wife only performed rarely at pre-migration stage. As indicated in chap. 3.1, a wife's status is closely connected with her husband's. Therefore, male out-migration for labour also increases women's status. Contrariwise, looking at intra-household participation in decision-making, the social capital of a wife living in an extended household diminishes during migration. Because the husband, who used to intercede for his wife with his parents, is absent, a wife's interests are less noticed and represented. The social capital of a woman living in a nuclear household decreases even more for the reason that she stays in a household with no man. Women feel insecure when there is no man to protect them from burglars. Hence, changes in a wife's social capital in correlation with migration is characterised by ambivalent dynamics. Interviews revealed that the negative tendencies generally outbalance the positive ones. Women's social capital in therefore remains unchanged despite the manifold dynamics evoked by migration.

After migration the situation generally converges to pre-migration situation again. There might be changes in natural and physical capital for the same reasons as during migration. Further changes occur in the remaining assets as following:

- **Human capital**: Human capital remains at the same level as during migration for both women and men, i.e. higher than before migration. Exceptions are men who return wounded or chronically sick. Yet, these are singular cases.

- **Natural capital**: After migration, a household's natural capital remains the same, unless more land can be purchased from savings. As the husband is present again, a wife gives the management of the farm out of her hands. However, as a home-stayer acquired experience and skills in working and managing the fields, a woman might be more involved in decision-making than before migration. Her natural capital therefore does not sink to pre-migration level. A husband's natural capital after migration is displayed alike before. On the one hand, he might possess more land than before, but on the other hand, he has less control over the management than before, as his wife plays a more important role than she did before migration.
- **Financial capital**: The financial capital generally decreases again. At best, savings could be allocated or a pension is obtained. Partly, the financial penalties are compensated for men's augmented activity in wage employment. Women gain more control over husbands' earnings as they can appraise what their husbands are earning by doing a certain job in the village or nearby town. Furthermore, women hold the purse more often than before migration. On the other side, women might have less money than during migration because remittances cease. Pulling these ambivalent dynamics together, a woman's capital is displayed with a slight increase. The husband, contrariwise, loses control over money but still endues more than before migration. The graph shows a slight decline.
- **Social capital**: The social capital at post-migration stage decreases slightly for both wife and husband. Yet, it still remains on a higher level than at pre-migration stage. A returnee's social capital decreases slightly compared to the migration stage, as he is not earning incessantly any more but rather depends on temporary jobs. A wife's social capital decreases, as her husband is able to cultivate social connections himself again. In this point, he depends less on his wife than during migration. Furthermore, he attends community meetings himself again, albeit not that much as before migration. Compared to pre-migration stage, women are more often present at meetings after migration. Nevertheless, exactly at the community level, increased

social capital does not have the same effects for women and men. Whereas men related that they felt more respected at meetings, women remained mostly uninvolved in community politics, even though being present more often. Thus, women's social capital is not transferred to the community level, whereas men's is. To summarise, it can be stated that migration enlarges gender disparities in asset endowments. Yet, after migration the disparities diminish again. Exceptions are the social capital where disparities remain higher than before migration because a returnee's reputation profits more from foreign employment than his wife's. The following subchapter will analyse whether out-migration for labour also increases disparities in the bargaining power of women and men.

5.4.3. Gendered participation in decision-making as a result of "cooperative conflicts"

On the background of the patriarchal character of Nepal's society (see chap. 3.1) it can be assumed that women's contributions to the household's reproduction and production are generally underestimated. Additionally, women's needs and interests are subordinated to men's or perceived as being concordant with "the family's" interests (Agarwal 1997:11). Furthermore, as women do not own land and are not meant to remarry in case of divorce, abandonment or death of the husband, they depend more on the continuation of the matrimony than do men. Insofar, all four factors that are determining bargaining power according to Sen (1990) and Agarwal (1997) (see chap. 2.1.5) are basically formed in a way, which discriminates women. In the following, it is highlighted how out-migration for labour impacts women's bargaining power:

- **"Breakdown well-being response"**: Out-migration for labour is a joint strategy. Both spouses give their shares in order to implement the strategy to reach a common objective: more cash income. Insofar, migration is a case of cooperation. As we have seen, during migration

women have to shoulder bigger workloads, women living in nuclear households are generally more burdened than women living in extended households. On the other side, women's participation in decision-making in nuclear households increases – but to a very limited extent only. For women living in extended households, participation in decision-making even decreases during migration. From this perspective, women do not seem to profit from migration. Why then, do women give their consent to migration? There are four possible explanations:

1) Women also hope to profit from migration. Despite increased workloads, they expect their lives to become easier because their financial means would increase.
2) "Perceived interest response": women subordinate their own interests (e.g. to have to work less) to the wealth of the whole household.
3) Cultural norms stipulate a woman to support her husband in his intentions. In doing so, society honours her with a higher status. People following the rules are usually more esteemed.
4) Women simply are not in the position to give anything else than consent. They are not asked but have to accept the facts, as the decision to migrate is made by the husband himself or together with his parents. Yet, this was hardly the case in Kalabang. Most wives have been consulted by their husbands. Yet, for the above mentioned cultural values and social reasons, a wife might find it impossible to express disagreement. However, most women simply did not see an alternative opportunity.

- **"Perceived interest response"/"perceived need response"**:

During migration, the interests and needs of a wife living with her in-laws are less represented because her there is nointercession from the husband any more and in-laws are less likely to take her interests into account. The situation improves for the wife when she gives

birth to a son. Then, she might talk in the name of her son. In nuclear households situation is very different. As a wife cannot confer with her husband on every issue and every decision she has to take, she has to resort to her own interests. However, she is not free to do whatever she wants. First, a wife has an idea about the interests of her husband and will not ignore them as usually a husband's role as formal household head is unquestioned. In this way, a husband's interests are taken into account in a limited way even when he is not present. Second, a wife's participation in decision-making is limited to operational decisions. Strategic decisions further on need the consent of the husband.

- **"Perceived contributions response"**: The contribution a woman accomplishes in the household's subsistence economy, housekeeping, childcare and even earning an income in agricultural sector is generally valued less than men's contribution: cash income. However, during migration, women's contributions are more estimated, as they have to shoulder bigger workloads and take on the major responsibility for farm and household management. Indeed, many men expressed their concern with their women who had to work "too much". This esteem augments a woman's bargaining power.

When a husband migrates, familiar work sequences and decision-making processes get confused. Roles and tasks have to be newly divided and re-bargained. It might be that old patterns of behaviour dehisce. Bargaining for new roles and competencies is manifested in arousing conflicts between spouses. Yet, my data reveals very little cases of conflicts between spouses. As Miller (1990) rightly stresses, ideological factors and forces are important influences on decision-making outcomes. Yet, cultural and social norms and values also influence the decision-making process. How a decision is made is determined by how problems are handled. Additionally, the relation of participants to each other shape the way decisions are taken. In Kalabang, decisions are mainly based on consultation, discussion and consensus. However, this does not necessarily mean that both spouses

– and all participants – contribute equally. The harmonic way in which decisions are taken rather indicates that different individual roles are not contested and questioned. When a husband prefers a certain young man as a groom for his daughter and the wife prefers another man she might not insist to her preference ("perceived interest response"). She might not even tell about her preference as she accepts that her husband is the household head and this is a decision that he is entitled to take. However, she might also accept any choice of her husband for another reason: As she has had the chance to pre-select potential grooms, any choice corresponds with her interest. Hence, the absence of conflicts indeed indicates harmonic relationships – but not necessarily egalitarian relationships. Furthermore, to evaluate women's and men's bargaining power is difficult, as decision-making power consists of a complex compound of factors as was shown above. What can be concluded is that the mere absence of conflicts can be ascribed to the way, how decisions are taken – and not to the absence of conflicting interests. In a consensus-culture, conflicts are circumnavigated. Furthermore, in a society where migration is such a standard solution to an economical problem, one could assume that there are standard behavioural sets concerning adequate labour division and decision-making during migration stages.

5.4.4. Conclusions: Changes and stability

In chap. 3.2, it was stated that female home-stayers shouldered the main work burden and took on full responsibility for the day-to-day management of the household and subsistence while their husbands worked abroad. It was further hypothesised that in doing so, women's status would increase. Pignède (1993), Macfarlane and Gurung (1992), Rodenburg (2000) and Jolly et al. (2003) all support this hypothesis. Putting the hypothesis in the perspective of my own findings, it can basically be supported. Yet, considerable limitations have to be pointed out to state the thesis more precisely. In Kalabang, women do not take on "full responsibility" of farm and household management for the following reasons:

1) All women who live with their parents-in-law have generally limited decision-making competencies.
2) Even women living in nuclear households have not full autonomy, and thus do not bear full responsibility. Strategic decisions are taken by the husband either on home-leaves or from abroad or are taken by both spouses together.

Anyway, a wife is not left to her own resources. Or put it the other way: A husband keeps control from abroad. Referring to workload, with the analysis of my data it can be affirmed that women take on the major part of work. Yet, in this point, too, limitations have to be added: Women get support in coping with the work burden by hiring people (if money is available), by other household or family members and by the husband during home-leaves.

6. Conclusions: Changing gender relations?

The study in hand adds to the newly emerging field of migration studies a piece from its opposite side – the side of those who stay in the village. The study's focus is laid on gender relations, particularly on changes that come along with out-migration for labour. It was elaborated how the absence of husbands affected everyday lives of wives who stayed at home. Approaching gender relations, the dimensions "labour division" and "participation in decision-making" were scrutinised. The data on which the study is based upon was obtained from semi-structured and structured interviews conducted in the village Kalabang in Nepal's hill zone.

Pfau-Effinger's (1996) Gender Arrangement theory and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) were both used as guiding frameworks to focus empirical analysis. To improve the analytical value of the SLF for this specific question, the framework was further differentiated to the intra-household level. This finer grid unearthed the direct consequences in labour division and decision-making. Furthermore, it revealed indirect effects via the asset endowments. To analyse decision-making dynamics, Sen's (1990) model of Cooperative Conflicts was applied.

In the following, empirical findings will be reviewed. The review will then answer the core question: **Do gender relations change during out-migration for labour?** First of all, a general characterisation of the predominant gender arrangement in Kalabang and the impacts of migration on it are presented. I will then compile the findings of this study in order to describe the form of gender relations and finally appraise gender relations on the basis of these findings in order to judge the degree of these gender relations according to Walby (1994).

General characterisation. Out of the four types of gender arrangements presented in chap. 2.1.3, gender relations in Kalabang can be characterised as a mixture of the two types "family enterprise model" and model of "male supply matrimony". On the one hand, households depend to a large extent on subsistence and children are considerable labour forces, namely in agricultural subsistence production. This is the central characterisation of "family enterprise model". On the other hand, spouses can also count on cash income. As was shown in chap. 5.2, it is considered a man's duty to provide cash. The exclusively male competence to provide household members with cash is a characteristic of the "male supply matrimony". Yet, it was also shown that women's wage employment in agriculture is a very common strategy to gain further income. On the other hand, men also get involved in housekeeping. Hence, the two spheres of labour are not as strictly divided as assumed in the model of the "male supply matrimony". Rather is the share of the household, childcare and wage employment competencies between wife and husband a characteristic of the "egalitarian-family centred model". Yet, this model does not contain subsistence economy as a strategy of its representatives. Furthermore, although spheres of labour are not strictly divided in practise, the norms on female and male competencies are very clear. Therefore, gender relations in Kalabang are best addressed by assigning to them a mixture of the "family enterprise model" and the model of "male supply matrimony". This is further appropriate, as wage employment for women is clearly seen as in fact necessary but not preferable. As soon as migration takes place, there is a shift towards the model of "male supply matrimony". With male migration, labour division gets stricter and wage income becomes more important.

After this general characterisation, I will look at gender relations in Kalabang in detail. In doing so, Walby's (1994) demand to distinguish between form and degree of gender disparities[54] (see chap. 2.1.2)

[54] Walby (1994) uses the term "patriarchy" to describe relations between women and men. I prefer the term "gender disparities" or "gender relations", which are less ideological (see also chap. 2.1.2).

will be applied. Form and degree of gender relations were distinguished by posing the following questions:

- Form: How is women's (or men's) discrimination practised; how is it manifested?
- Degree: How wide are gender disparities?

Form of gender relations

Labour division. Women generally work more hours a day than men. Their core competence is the housekeeping and childcare. They also accomplish a large amount of agricultural work. Yet, in agriculture, women are supported by husbands who contribute substantially, namely by performing "men's tasks" such as ploughing. In agriculture (the only sector where women – apart from a few exceptions – are employed for money), women earn lower salaries, indicating that their work force is esteemed less, indicating less human capital. During out-migration for labour, the workload for women even increases as they partially replace their husbands' labour force. A part of the workload is taken on by other household members and/or hired people. When husbands return, women's workloads decrease again but remain higher than before migration because returnees are more likely to be employed and thus are not available to give support in housekeeping and agriculture.

Decision-making. Whereas women work more, in decision-making they clearly contribute less than their male spouses. It is generally the male household head that takes the final decisions. Yet, in the majority of cases, the household head does not decide before having consulted various household members, particularly his wife. Although decision-making processes are generally based on agreement and consensus, women's interests and needs are subordinated to men's, especially in extended households. The only exceptions are the fields of health care and day-to-day expenses.

Out-migration for labour has ambivalent effects on women's participation in decision-making. Women living in nuclear households on the one hand gain scope of action because they become de facto household heads, decide about operational decisions and attend community meetings. On the other hand, women become more dependent on men's income and simultaneously lose control over it. For women living in extended households the dynamics are clearer. Their scope of action decreases, as husbands, who used to function as intercessors between them and their in-laws, are not available any more to represent their interests and needs.

After husbands' return, the situation generally returns to its initial position. Only few changes persist:

- Women persistently gain scope in management of money and attendance of community meetings.
- As women acquired skills and gained self-esteem by managing the household and farm by themselves, it can be assumed that they bring in their experience and represent their interests more decisively than they used to do before migration. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that after husbands' return, husbands will take on de facto household head function again (husbands never gave out of hand formal household head function). Therefore, in nuclear households, women's participation in decision-making decreases again after husbands' return but does not shrink to the same low level as at pre-migration stage. Daughters-in-law living in extended households, in contrast, can count on an improved representation of their interests, as their intercessors are available again. Insofar, the husbands' return also leads to ambivalent dynamics as does their leave.

Regarding these processes, how can the described dynamics be evaluated? Do they lead to more egalitarian gender relations or do they enlarge gender disparities? An answer of these questions is approximated in the following.

Degree of women's discrimination

It is difficult and delicate to draw a final conclusion, first for the above described ambivalent dynamics and second, because effects on workload and participation in decision-making depend on other factors such as

- quantity of land property,
- financial situation,
- age of children,
- type of household (extended or nuclear household),
- relevance of decisions (strategic or operational decision) and
- individual – mostly tacit – arrangements between spouses.

The findings are clear when looking at wives living with parents-in-law: Out-migration for labour widens gender disparities for daughters-in-law sustainable. Yet, disparities are weakened again after husbands' return. Women living in nuclear households can compensate for their increased workloads with more decision-making power, although this is very limited and admittedly not experienced as an advantage. In order to review and further elaborate these explorative findings and prove whether gender relations reveal more egalitarian or more unequal gender relations on the basis of out-migration for labour, a confrontation with the values and own judgements of these women and men would be fruitful. It is important to do so in a reliable and valid manner and the researcher should always bear the structural and socio-cultural context in mind.

Even though it is difficult to point out the direction towards which changes in gender relations head, it was shown that migration produces manifold dynamics in gender relations. However, it is interesting that interview partners – both women and men – seldom were aware of any changes. When asked about changes informants had faced or were facing during migration, the only direct answer obtained often was that financial resources had increased and therefore the day-to-day management of the household had become easier. There was little agitation about shifting gender relations. Women and

men even appeared not to be aware of the dynamics they were part of. This can be explained by the following reasons:

- **Temporary character of out-migration for labour and its impacts**
  Changes evoked by migration are only of a temporary character. Behaviour that does not properly correspond with social norms concerning gender norms is met with indulgence and tolerated because it is understood as being based on the exceptional absence of the husband resulting from economic necessity. As soon as the situation allows it, i.e. the husband is back again, "normal" gender relations are re-established.
- **Superficial changes**
  The detected changes are not basic changes. They are viewed rather as differences than as deviations. E.g. husbands hand over de facto household head function, but not formal. Similarly, women take on agricultural tasks that usually are done by men, but not tasks that are exclusively done by men, such as ploughing.
- **Institutionalised strategy**
  As migration is a strategy already applied over years, migration is highly institutionalised. Like the strategy itself, how to cope with husbands' absence is also institutionalised and thus not perceived as anything new.

For the above reasons, gender specific norms and rules are not fundamentally challenged and people's gender identities are not questioned. However, even though changes in gender relations are of a temporarily character only, for the overall community, gender relations are more flexible than they would be without out-migration for labour.

With the concentration on labour division and participation in decision-making, this study clearly focuses on two dimensions out of many others that determine gender relations. The analysis of further dimensions, such as social networks, sexuality or education might prove or challenge the findings of this study. Anyway, the inclusion of further dimensions would allow gaining a more all-embracing

picture of social processes in the home village, which come along with migration. Furthermore, by using other dimensions, the results of the study in hand could be compared with additional case studies from different settings. As Pfaffenbach (1995) has already shown in her study in Syria, living circumstances at pre-migration stage have an influence on the impacts of migration. Similarly, it is possible that people of another jat cope in a different way with migration, as they are acting on the basis of different cultural contexts. There are additional research areas, which would help to understand this side of the migration phenomenon better. Impact of migration for home-stayers on the emotional level is one of them. What does it mean for a wife to live a large period of her life without her husband? Further, the singular stages of decision-making processes and respective shares of participation could be researched in detail. Other issues remained untried, such as the influence of the duration of migration, the significance of the amount, the reliability and the regularity of remittances or the effect of the husbands' occupations abroad. The list could be extended for many issues.

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